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ALTOWAN;

OR,

INCIDENTS OF LIFE AND ADVENTURE

IN

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

BY

AN AMATEUR TRAVELER.

EDITED BY

J. WATSON WEBB.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

11

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ALTOWAN.

CHAPTER I.

Five days had passed without any remarkable incident; and we find Altowan at the approach of evening, looking on the games of archery, or throwing with the hand the arrows as a javelin, which occupied a crowd of youths with whom he was a paramount favorite. He was like them, stripped to the girdle round his loins, and entered into their sports with that interest which youth alone can take in the reckless pastimes of the young, feigning to compete with one in the race, with another in games of skill, wrestling with those of maturer growth, but in all bringing his strength and his spirits to a match with theirs. They were something beyond the limits of the camp, and on the river bank. A few boys, too young to mingle in such athletic exercises, were hovering round them, occasionally attempting to seize a stray arrow, or for a moment trying to keep abreast in a race, with other little arts to attract attention, or try to claim a participation in their pursuits. One of these, whose eye the habit of savage watchfulness had taught to recur continually to the distant horizon, grew intent on some dim object which appeared emerging from the pines at the foot of a small valley, that ushered its tributary stream into the light a little below that by which Altowan and Idalie had arrived. In an instant the looks of all were fixed in the same direction. It was a horseman descending at a rapid pace the steep, in a direction toward the camp. A dark pennon waved from his lance; and something in his appearance, though yet afar off, told that he was fresh from the field of strife. A bend of the stream where it approaches the bluff some little distance higher, promised the best opportunity of arresting his progress, to obtain the news; and the giddy throng, riding at all the gradations of speed, made the valley echo with their shrill yells as they bounded toward the narrow pass. It was not difficult to stay the jaded steed, though the rider showed that he would willingly have disregarded the clamor, waving a scalp as a trophy and an answer to their demands; but the horse, to whom the heel and the whip were in vain applied, yielded to the fatigue which the clustering inquirers gave him an excuse to show, and could not be urged out of a walk; and when the eye of the returning warrior, discovered in the throng the form of Altowan, waiting rather aloof from the rest, his taciturnity changed, and he appeared anxious to proclaim that the party had attacked some detached whites, accompanied by some Crows, and had defeated them, and taken several horses and scalps.

The tide, before opposing, now turned on the village to proclaim the triumph; and as they almost left Altowan alone with the horseman, the latter was enabled to inform him farther, that the Blackfoot leader was killed, and that Pinatsi had taken his place, and was bringing in a white chief as prisoner. Altowan referred him to the other chiefs, telling him to inform them. With some surprise at his indifference, the avant courier now pushed on toward the camp, and left him at his leisure to follow. That the partisan should have been killed, was not to him a matter of grief; he was a brave whose increasing popularity must displace some one already above him in the scale, and this last success would have confirmed his rise. That a white chief should be brought in, was a matter that might touch him nearer, and embarrass all his proceedings; but what determined as well as cheered the line of conduct he must adopt to accomplish his designs, was the influence he might gain by Pinatsi's advancement. He proceeded leisurely, ruminating on these events, to where he had disembarrassed himself of his robe to take a part in those sports which had served to dissipate his cares and divert the attention of those who watched his movements with a jealous scrutiny.

Among those youths whom he loved to join in their juvenile feats, and who was more particularly prominent in his activity and daring than his companions, was a son of the old chief who had some days before harangued the village, yet only fourteen years of age. *Louis*—for so he had been called, after a Hudson Bay trapper on the Sexscatchowan—had more acuteness and knowledge of the world than many of the most experienced of the Indian council. He had learned to read passably well from Altowan; and thus joined superior knowledge to the savage qualities of cunning and self-command. The boy, who loved Altowan, would often make him aware of cabals and secret enmities—of the perpetrators of crime, as well as meditated treachery;

and he loved to see the prompt and fearless redress which he invariably rendered to the weak and the wronged. Having with his garment, reassumed that dignity of demeanor that distinguishes the Indian on his native soil, he proceeded calmly toward his lodge, where several of his adherents were already assembled to talk over the news and hear the opinion of one, to whom his enemies could not deny the attributes of superior wisdom, and of that power with which these savages believe some are invested to control events and determine destinies. A verified prediction founded on probable calculations, or an example of any of the phenomena of nature judiciously applied, stamps alike the prophet and the magician. It was during a desultory conversation on the probable result of a more general attack, that the uproar of the approaching horses, diverted the attention of each from all other matters to the care of his steed, and separated the conclave. Altowan had mounted one of his band and started to perambulate the camp; he had not proceeded far, however, before Louis bounded up behind him in one of those sportive moods that he sometimes wore to cover some news that he wished to convey without suspicion to his instructor and friend. "Put your horse in a gallop," he said, as he clasped his companion from behind, and essayed to throw him off his balance. In the struggle, and between shouts of boyish merriment, he however, managed to communicate that the white chief was Roallan, and that he was to be sacrificed to revenge the death of the partisan, more to try Altowan's power than for any other cause; but he added, "I know they think, that you once out of the way, they can set aside my father while I am yet too young to take his place, and my elder brothers are unfit." Some one at this moment called out to arrest the progress of Altowan, to tell him that the remainder of the war party were expected on the morrow. Another, a man of determined mien and sedate manner, told him of some large bands of Crows that had been seen in a valley not far distant, where there was good running ground. His hearer marked the man, and set him down in his mind as one who deserved more attention than the rest; but the remark gave him joy. He knew that he from whom it came, was never cautious where there was no cause; and he felt that this shallow attempt was an evidence of the power he still was considered to possess in the Blackfoot camp.

Morning dawned, and already the lodge of Perahoe was filled with visitors, principally women. Idalie had heard vaguely, that a white chief had been taken; and her heart told her it was Roallan, as she knew that no one whose ransom would not be of great value, would have been brought along. The danger that an unprotected prisoner would incur among a savage tribe—to whom lenity was unknown, and whose passions were excited by recent loss—had caused her an uneasiness that she could not conceal; and she set out to seek her brother, to beg his protection and aid for the unfortunate Roallan. Forced to this by the approaching emergency, it was not however, done without those misgivings and that shame which attend the avowal—on the part of a young girl who for the first time loves—of an interest in the fate of a young man who has never made a public declaration of his own feelings in her favor. Notwithstanding that she had been, from her infancy, brought up among scenes where danger is rendered familiar to the mind, and accustomed to witness cruelty and blood which would be supposed to destroy the fine susceptibilities of the female character, the feelings of Idalie were as noble, as generous, and as soft—only without the weakness of nerve

—as those of the gentle-bred daughters of the British noble.

The sun—which, in these latitudes, shortly follows the break of dawn—had already tipped with red the snowy peaks of the Tetons, although in the shadow of the valley below, lingered the dim haze of the morning; and the first smokes were slowly curling and hanging like vapor among the almost indistinct lodges. Idalie had proceeded some little way, when she thought she heard a distant yell, and could perceive some commotion among the horses, that but lately loosed from their pickets, had not yet reached the extremity of their range. A rider approached at full speed through the camp and haltde at the lodge of Altowan, who his sister could perceive, issued forth armed, and leaped on the horse which always stood ready at his door. A few words from a voice but rarely heard, rang through the drowsy camp and woke the morning echo; but Idalie could scarcely participate in the interest which their sounds produced, from the dread that she might be deprived of her brother's aid in a matter which concerned her more than the danger from the attack he now announced. From each door hurried the naked Indians, armed; and eagerly were all footsteps bent toward the herds of horses that were now seen, in hurried confusion, driven in every direction; and occasional shots were heard, which proved the horse guards to be already engaged with some hostile band. The confusion now seemed at its height—if confusion can exist where there is unity of design—and, as if by some centrifugal force, all were propelled outward in the directions where they hoped to find their horses, each making his way to the nearest band. Altowan's object was to turn the horses, so as to furnish those who were coming up from the village with the means of pursuit, while the marauders were hindered by the difficulty of separating those they could drive off from the main body. It was on reaching this scene, that he first perceived the want of strength in the attacking force. He had already turned back, by some youths who in the morning, accompanied the guards at the turn-out, a sufficient number of horses to meet those who were rushing out from the camp on foot; and as they came up, their eagerness was not to be either guided or restrained. The Flatheads—for it was they—were now apparently, anxious to secure what they could; and in fact, had collected a considerable number of horses, which they were at tempting to carry off in a direction toward the western pass. With riding-cords and lassos waving round their heads, and the usual yell produced by any excitement, they had collected them in a dense mass, and given the necessary impetus; and having already attained a considerable distance, it required much exertion to reach them before they entered the rough ground and pines where their road lay, and where their recovery would be more difficult than in the plain. Taking a short cut, some of the last who started were now up, and the race was the more animated because it was of doubtful issue. The number however, who had come up to the rescue, was already more than sufficient to insure the recapture; and Altowan, as he rushed on, turned a moment to survey from the last point of view, the scene he had left behind.

From a growing doubt of the object of so daring an exploit, the whole valley below appeared to be a scene of commotion, some collecting their animals for safety, while the greater part were following to overtake the fugitives. Early accustomed to surprises, and from strength of mind as well as habit, possessed of the use of all his faculties in any emergency, however sudden, he could not but perceive that there was something unusual in the mode of conducting this attack. The tide of horsemen who were now intent on pursuit, was fast increasing; and the camp had scarcely left in it, other than those whom physical inability detained. Calmly, as he checked the eager animal he rode, he hovered a moment in the entrance of the gorge into which pursuers and pursued, were straining their speed. He well knew how difficult it was to bridle the savage in his career; but he also knew that the safety of the unprotected village might be compromised, and was resolved to hazard the attempt. Perceiving a youth who was usually attached to his interest, and often a follower, he called to him to stop—that there were enough gone on—but was unheeded. At a loss how to check the unnecessary numbers who were leaving the valley, he was glad to perceive *Loui*, and in a few bounds was at his side. Catching the riding-cord, he forced him out of the eager route. A high shoulder abutted into the valley and formed a precipice on the left of the gorge, Somewhat farther back, the rocks opposite, approaching, leave but a narrow passage at their base; and here the light is obscured and the vision circumscribed, by the darkling mass of pines that canopy the rugged path. Almost overwhelmed by the crowd, Altowan still held the bridle of the eager boy, pointing toward the camp through the vast mass that obstructed their view. "You would not see the enemies of our race ravage the dwellings of our people! Must I go alone to breast the torrent that overwhelms the defenseless camp? The Blackfeet are mad, and would banquet on the fools that sacrifice themselves to make us greater fools, and think to dance their scalps with those they love; but they wot not that there will be none to listen to their call, and none to dance the scalps that may be taken. Fools, will no one turn?" To the wild gaze of the crowd, the words and gestures of the speaker, assumed the form of prophecy, and some drew up.

Their attention once gained, the probability of an attack, added to the mystic warning, and the authority from which it came, had their combined effect. Plunging downward the few hundred yards that would bring them again in sight of the camp, the eye could scarcely tell in the confused scene below, whether the dust was the dust of enemies or friends. But when the frequent discharges of arms and yells of triumph, met the ear, there could remain but little doubt of the state of things below. It was impossible for a body of horsemen to make a concealed approach from this direction; but no eye that saw that sight, sought shelter or concealment; no shout heralded their approach; but the loose rein, the set teeth, the clinched weapon, all denoted the horror and desperation of those who thus discerned the success of their enemies. The steed, strained to his utmost span, bounds with streaming tail over rock and chasm; the meteor-like hair of the rider floats above—each in his own course passing down the valley-side like dark streaks. The feint of the Flatheads, had been thus far successful; a deserted camp had been exposed to their plunder; and they had seized the opportunity of the last departures, to rush upon the infirm men, the women and children, who alone remained of the last night's thickly-peopled village.

Almost distracted by the fears she entertained for another, Idalie, after the first alarm, flew toward the horses that were crowding in startled terror round the camp, more to dissipate uneasy thoughts than with any decided purpose of action; she perceived there, one of the favorite racers of her brother, and became intent upon securing him in case of the band breaking away. Although these animals are domesticated like the horse of the Bedouin Arab, and are usually as docile as a dog, they are easily roused into a state of wild alarm by a few shots, or the sudden appearance of strangers among them.* Occupied for some time in attempts to seize the trail rope, she was not aware that it was the din of devastation which came at intervals on her ear from the lodges she had left. At last, in circling round, she caught the wished-for rope, and fixing it round the under jaw for a bridle, in a moment was on his back. She could now see more clearly what was going on. Lodges were being thrown down at the other extremity of the village, and shouts and cries denoted an attack. Undecided what to do, her eye fell on Watoe, who, having been out gathering fuel on the first alarm, had only now returned. Disencumbering himself of his female attire, as he always did in cases where activity was required, and armed with a bow and quiver, he ran to procure a horse and mingle in the general excitement; and Idalie smiled even in her dismay, on recognizing, in the naked figure before her, the features of the Broadashe, whom she had been accustomed to consider as a girl. To one so active, it did not require much time to be mounted; and seeing her hesitation, he immediately joined her, but with a countenance in which the hope of distinction had knit the brow and lighted the eye. "You must go up the valley; trust to your horse's speed and keep to the rising sun, and you will be safe there until the return of the men: we can save nothing unless they come back. Fly, fly!" he continued, as the tumult still approached; and in another moment he was speeding to where it was still at its height, while Idalie, scarcely decided, yielded to his advice.

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* It is a curious fact that an Indian of another tribe, entering the camp at night, immediately produces a sensation among the horses as well as dogs—the former snorting with fear, and the latter indicating by no vague bark the presence of a stranger or foe.

The scene of indiscriminate slaughter had already commenced; and as some of the mounted warriors rode through the throng of women and children—who, flying from one point of danger were every where precipitated upon another—they transfixed the boys with their arrows as they passed, took captive the young women, and butchered the old of either sex; while others, more intent on plunder, searched the overthrown lodges for whatever booty might be most easily transported, setting fire to the rest. The number that appeared to have thus formed the reserve, might consist of several hundred; and though composed of Nezperces and Pendorcelles, as well as Flatheads, came from what was called the Flathead camp. A portion of them who had come on foot, were occupied in obtaining horses; while the greater number were securing the female prisoners who had not been able to fly their approach. The leaders of the Flathead party, however, appeared to dread the effects of their scattered and desultory attack in case of the return of the Blackfeet from the pursuit in which they were occupied; and were in every direction, haranguing and calling together their bands. "The Blackfeet have threatened to take our women; let the Flatheads show them how," was the general cry. Driving them up to one spot, they had a considerable number of young squaws trooped together; and calling in the stragglers, commenced a retreat toward the lower end of the encampment by which they had entered—leaving behind smouldering piles and blending carcasses, the evidences of retaliation and long-cherished revenge.

It was during this time that Altowan had been able to make a part of the Blackfeet who had last come up, sensible of the necessity of returning to their abandoned village. The shots exchanged with a few youths who had remained, could be distinctly heard; and the prostrated lodges confirmed the appearance of hostility. In one of those hollows which the waters, descending from the heights on the melting of the snows, had scooped out, the now retreating party had taken refuge on perceiving the return of the horsemen from the upper pass. The headlong speed with which Altowan re-entered the scene that the despoilers had hardly left, was checked by an eager desire to discover if his sister had fallen a prey to the rapacious enemy, which led him toward her lodge, now trampled down, and nothing near it to denote the fate of its inmates. Attracted however, by the voice of an old hag, who was buried beneath a pile of skins, he learned the retreat with the squaws which had just taken place; and as his followers had now come up, animated by one spirit, they pursued their track.

Some Canadians belonging to a company of fur dealers, who encourage these wars among the Indians as beneficial to their trade, had accompanied as well as planned this expedition, and were not slow to perceive their danger on the return of the force that had been decoyed away, before their own retreat had been secured. Perceiving the impossibility of reaching the wood, they took up their position as we have stated, in a hollow, where flight might be turned into ambush. Before reaching this spot there was a considerable descent of open and smooth ground, which extended to the lip of the ravine. The straining eye of Altowan, a little in advance, on the search for some such hiding, detected the look-out or vidette, behind a shrub which was not sufficient to hide the dark head beyond. He slackened his pace, so as to let those behind come nearly up, when shouting that they were within their reach, he plunged onward into the dell. A general volley was poured upon the foremost who reached the brink; but the impetus had been given, and the wounded and the dying, both horse and rider, rolled headlong down over all that opposed their descent. It was now the time for those who could, to effect their escape, while their companions were engaged in the death struggle; and a considerable number mounted the opposite bank for that purpose. In the bottom of the ravine the contest was still one of almost equal advantage; although, the greater number being unhorsed by the shock, their immediate disposal became less a matter of necessity than that of following the others, who were furnished with the means of escape. One of those dispensations of fortune, by which to be first in such a charge is often to be in the safest position, had preserved Altowan. He had penetrated the opposing mass unhurt, brandishing his tomahawk with fatal effect, and was already among the women in the depth of the hollow. It was impossible to fire on him for fear of their friends, while he could shoot in almost every direction on a foe. Seeing that there were many who fled from the bank opposite to where he had made his entry into the melée, he now prepared to follow by disentangling himself from the throng of prisoners—many of whom clung to him, in confident belief that he could protect them, while others did deadly execution with the knife on such of their captors as were engaged within reach of its stroke.

A long line of fugitives appeared gaining the wood as he first caught a view of the open valley, and some Blackfeet were still joining their companions from the upper pass. One look was sufficient to show him that a good account would be rendered of those behind; and his thoughts were already with those fleeing before. The noble animal he rode, still bounded to the whip; and he still might cut off the retreat of all the horses by gaining the only path in that direction which lay before them. Taking some advantage in the ground, and having that of speed, he had cut off some considerable distance, and was fast gaining on the leaders of the flight, when he found himself joined by some three or four horsemen, who had been hitherto shut out from his view. Thus re-enforced, he at once bore down to break the line. Laying himself alongside the nearest horseman, he watched his opportunity, and fired while still a little in his rear; passing on to take the same advantage, always on the right side, his other barrel was discharged, and the space widened by the superior speed of his horse, between him and any attack from behind. In a similar way he used his pistols; so that those before, who had no chance of outstretching him, broke from their course and took to the borders of the woods, from what appeared a supernatural attack; while Watoe, and the others who had joined in the chase, made their arrows tell on several, and dispersed the greater number from the only road they had to pass through the pines. A considerable body had however, now come up to the rear of the retreat; and the before triumphant plunderers, were glad to speed for the nearest shelter, abandoning their horses when they entered its tangled shade. But Altowan, unsatisfied, still held on, in the hope of discovering the captors or the retreat of Idalie, sure that if any were spared for beauty, she must have been a valued prize.

The road was one of those uneven tracks which the difficulties of the passes obstruct in many places, so as to make it a matter of care and danger to proceed; blocks from the overhanging precipices piled in heaps, fallen trees, and narrow ledges, continually presenting obstacles which his impatience could not quickly overcome. It was yet early, for the events of the morning had not occupied more than two hours; the freshness and the cool and quiet air of the glen were a grateful contrast to the heat and exertion of the preceding excitement and action; but he could find no repose in the tranquillity of nature. The small fountain, that began the purling brook to increase to the mighty river, took its birth at his feet, and set out to mingle in the world of waters—not in gushing, irregular, and ambitious speed, but with a cold and inert regularity. We have heard of the calming, tranquilizing effects of gentle, shaded rills, of bubbling springs, and mirror basins; but we have felt in the mood when such contemplations were of maddening irritation—the thoughts bounding on, and the eyes unconsciously enchained. There was no trace on the path, and no flight could have taken place by that way without leaving one. A deep sadness, almost approaching to despondency, seized upon him; he dismounted a little off the path, where a plot of grass offered refreshment to his wearied steed, keeping watch while he reclined on the grass, with a mind far from the present scene, though with the eye of habitual vigilance. Here we must leave him, to return to the recaptured village.

The defeat and carnage of the Flatheads, were not achieved without loss on the part of the Blackfeet; but it was inconsiderable, and no trophies were lost to add to its sting. Most of the captured horses had been recovered, and many were abandoned in the flight; the last of the pursuers had returned; the women had already arrived, to mourn their losses and arrange what remained—the mother turning over the bodies of murdered children, and attempting to assuage the pains of the injured infant who looked wistfully for relief, but uttered no cry. The silent and stern warrior, brought in the bleeding scalps—all that could redeem the work of that morn—and flung them by the dismantled lodge.

A moody gloom pervaded all things; even the horses, confined from the better and cleaner grass of the distance, hung about in sulky groups; the dog howled, and the bright and burning sun, looked down in mockery with its glad beams; no wind stirred the tree on the mountain side, and no ripple broke the glassy surface of the stream; while the raven, which can never rejoice, circled over their heads, and all nature exhibited that bright calm which is more oppressive to the saddened heart than the deepest darkness or the wildest tempest.

After a time allotted to search, and to arranging the bodies of the dead and those on whom the hand of the ravager had not been fatal, such lodges were raised as had not been consumed or cut up, and a temporary shelter formed to replace others which had been destroyed. The afternoon was well advanced, when the watch was again put on the alert by the appearance of a cloud of dust and a troop of horsemen, who were speeding down from the higher pass. Their wild yells and irregular approach, and the herd they brought along, told the successful issue of their pursuit; and the long hair from the lance and the gun, waved the savage type of victory as well as vengeance. But with them the song of victory was also mute. They too, had learned the massacre in the camp, and had but their individual triumph to set off against general misfortune. In the heat of their chase, the Flatheads they followed, were stopped in the narrowest part, and near the end of a ledge of jutting rocks, by the report of a rifle, and the fall of the foremost of their men. A second followed; and those behind, seized with a panic, took to the precipice above, for safety. The time necessary for reloading did not afford them sufficient for escape; another and another report, and two more rolled back from their upward way. Altowan—for it was he—who, having taken a circuit, fell in with this party again—which had been delayed by a more difficult road, and had baffled the pursuers by showing fight in all tenable positions, while the horses were pushed on—now piled together the four bodies on the path, and returning to his horse, pursued the herd, which had passed on into an open glade and were browsing on its fresh and tender herbage. He waited until his friends, who found the dead bodies in the road, had rejoined him, to whom he told in few words, the disaster and route below, and directed one of the youths to seek him a fresh horse. The young man to whom he had addressed himself on entering the pass in the morning, and who had not heeded his direction to return, came up a little after the rest, pale, and bleeding from a flesh-wound in the arm—the only shot that had taken effect among his friends. Altowan observed the fact with a sign which caused some low remarks, in which were explained his not having obeyed the command, and the consequent punishment. It was evident that a deep impression had been made by the unlooked-for appearance of one, who single handed, had done what the united efforts of numbers might have failed to accomplish; and as they crowded up to partake in the mystic rite of the calumet—and he held it up as an offering to the bright orb above, and then below to the earth, their common mother—it was evident among all, with how much ease the human mind is brought to sanctify and to worship success in the person by whom it has been attained. Mounting again, he left those who had followed to reconduct the animals to the valley, while he prolonged his search for Idalie. Many offers were made to accompany him; but his grave though kind refusal, showed that he would be alone. The part he had taken in the events of this morning, he well knew, had re-established his rule over the minds of the tribe; but an object that he could neither avow nor explain, had taken in his thoughts, the place of Indian power and distinction; and he threaded slowly through those dark trees, and passed unheeded the hieroglyphics which were here and there pictured on the naked trunks, in record of some former deeds. Small piles of stone, a bison's skull, or a mound, marked the spot where had fallen some one, or some ambush had been laid, but attracted no attention as he emerged from the gloom of the now silent glen, and the open valley stretched beneath. The opposite side offered now the only chance; and he bent his way to where he had entered some days before. Here no track could be found; but there were other outlets, and he still crossed from one to another; still no track or trace met his eye, until, when the sun had well-nigh sunk, he came upon the trail of a party going toward the village. It was fresh, and the sign could not be mistaken; the band of Pinatsi had returned.

He turned, and his quickened pace soon brought him to the cabins and the few lodges that remained of the camp. Making for the spot where Perahoe's abode had stood, he had to pass many scenes of lamentation, and the shedding of those tears which the Indians think due to the earth for any loss of her children. Doubtful and sad, he heeded not what he saw; but a voice came upon his ear that started the blood from his heart, and he bent to meet the anxious look of his sister, who had sprung to his side. Her voice was low, and her words almost inarticulate; but their purport seemed to have a sudden and startling effect.

Round a large circle, where had been performed several rites, reverenced with superstitious observance and immemorial use, sat the leading men of the Blackfeet. A dense crowd surrounded the ring, and some excitement seemed to move the dark spirit of which it was composed. Some of the principal medicine-men of the tribe, were about to give an answer regarding some question of importance; and the attention of all appeared to be absorbed amid symptoms of impatient suspense or ominous and moody silence, as they crowded round the point of interest, when a horseman approached. Having caught the eye of one on the outside, who made way, he slackened not his pace, but rode unquestioned, through the path that was opened for him to pass. The eyes of all were turned upon him; while his glance, high above the rest, and accustomed to return the gaze of hundreds, sought out the chosen of his adherents, though apparently in a general survey, yet with a meaning they well understood. The effect of his coming was evident in the general movement around. Arrived at the spot where sat the chiefs and the prophets of the camp, and placing one hand lightly on the neck of his steed, he bounded to the ground with that lightness of spring which so clearly denotes the elasticity and vigor of youth. With a lofty air and firm step, he strode across the circle. Leaving the fire to his right, and following the course of the sun, he seated himself between two of the most influential leaders in the council, whose deliberation still continued in murmurs since the last speaker had ended. After the lapse of some little time, the old chief, seeing that the council had been interrupted, and that no one seemed to care to take any farther part in its discussions, addressed them in mild tones, hiding the purpose of identifying the power and influence of Altowan with the fate of the prisoner in their hands, whom the absolute refusal of Pinatsi to deliver up had hitherto preserved from the general excitement. His manner unimpassioned and bland; the slight allusion and accompanying tremor of voice in speaking of the death of one of his sons in the morning's attack; and the treacherous praise he bestowed on Altowan, whom he pronounced worthy to be a Blackfoot, did not blind any one who had heard him, to the real tenor of his discourse. A pause ensued as he ended, and the eyes of all were turned on Altowan.

"I address the strong, the brave, and the wise among you," he said, "who are my brothers, not the weak and the old. Under a thin veil, you have been told to take the scalp of a prisoner in your camp. Who are the warriors that can not go hence and kill their enemies in the plain, and would stain us with the blood of one to whom protection has been promised, that they may not forget what it is to see a brave man die? Why did they not go out and strike him in his path as he came? Is it that the pale heart fears the pale face? If I know things that are hidden from your eyes, hear my words. Why have the chiefs led you away from the whites when the grass is green on the mountain side, that come, like bondsmen, to furnish me with supplies for our people? The same men would have you, also, lose the ransom of a white chief who is loaded with riches. Where were these men while the sun was yet low behind the Mountains of the Winds, and the foe of our race was at the door, and the arrow and the knife were busy among the defenseless? It was the will of the Great Spirit that you should be punished; and he took you away that you might not protect your women and your children. Would you again call down his vengeance? The white chief shall smoke the pipe of peace in our council, and he will then talk of his ransom." He made a sign to one of the youths who had been with him at the recapture of the horses in the morning; who, breaking through the throng, and followed by several more, went toward the spot where Roallan sat, accompanied by Pinatsi and some others, who had been engaged in the same expedition.

Altowan, who had resumed his seat, having risen, contrary to the custom in council, to be more generally heard, now looked round to read the effect of his words on those immediately about him; but in their averted looks he read enough to show him that he must enlist a more general support. Once a chief on the opposite side raised his head, as if with the intention to speak; but quailed under the eye that was bent upon him. It was an uneasy pause; and at length, the movement of those making room for his approach, announced the coming of the prisoner, and he stood on the verge of the circle. There was a slight pallor in his countenance, occasioned by a wound which he had received in the right arm, disabling it for the moment, and occasioning his capture; but the expression of the head, and the whole air of the young white, was full of noble and unsuspicious confidence. Having exchanged his former dress for an Indian costume, he wore but the leggins and the girdle, with a small robe hung over the right shoulder, supporting his arm, and fastened round the neck by a leather thong—his fair throat forming a bright relief to the dark fur of the skin that was turned back over his shoulders. There was a dread in the mind of Altowan, lest—uninstructed as he was regarding his position—he might injure his cause by some indication of pride or betrayal of apprehension; but he was reassured by a glance, and giving time for that pause which might look like deliberation, he motioned Roallan to be seated, and desired the old chief to offer the pipe of peace.

It was not without an inward struggle, that the ancient warrior brought himself to present the sacred offering of friendship to one whom he had doomed to destruction; but it was no place for a brawl, and, taken as he was by surprise, and under an influence he saw it was vain to resist, he presented with graceful courtesy to the stranger, that pledge, originally as sacred among these tribes as the salt with the wandering Arab. Meantime, an impression decidedly favorable, had been made upon a great part of the assembly; and while the calculation of gain by his preservation was circulated among them, the most hostile deemed his life and safety now important, until the ransom should be paid. The first round of the calumet, passed without being refused by any one; but he who had appeared willing to offer active opposition, withdrew himself gently from the circle. The three pipes were finished, as the sinking sun threw its last rays on the closing of the council, and Roallan announced, through his interpreter Altowan, that he would be guided in the amount of his ransom by the wants and wishes of the chiefs.

Thus far all had gone well; and they retired to where a temporary lodge had been formed for Altowan, out of what remained from the morning's destruction. It was formed of a remnant of skins attached to poles about eight feet in length, and extending somewhat more than the half of a circle, with its back to the wind. Here several of the expedition of Pinatsi, with a few of the idle and the curious, were assembled round a blazing fire; and as the shadows of evening settled down, there were many such lights blazing forth, which the night before, had been shrouded by the white lodge, the cheerful, and not ignoble home of the mountain Indian.

There was many a cry heard that night of the bereft mother, of the widow, and the child who mourned a parent; the wolves had enough to quiet them, in the carcasses of horses and men who had been left to their care; and the human wail alone, rose upon the evening air. Under a small clump of bushes, not far from the shelter we have described, sat a figure enveloped in a blanket, and singing a low and melancholy dirge. It was a wild but simple air; and there was a rich tone that now and then escaped the generally subdued voice of her who sang. There was no dwelling near, for that spot had been the scene of death not long before, as many had taken shelter in its shade to hide themselves from the wanton cruelty of the pillagers. Engrossed with their own woes, no one seemed to think of those of another; and the lone voice would have appeared neither singular nor misplaced to any one that might have chanced to observe it, or the spot whence it came. The female—for such by her tones she seemed to be—lay under that shade, and the plaint that came from her in the simple cadence of her song, seemed ever to return in its repetition, to the original source of war. After the lapse of some time, during which her eye gazed anxiously through the surrounding obscurity, two other forms might have been observed at some little distance; and then only one, and that one approached the spot where the shadow was deeper, and the voice was now mute. How strange is the sympathy by which one can discover the presence of an object of love or of hate, in whatever disguise; the heightening pulse obeying some secret influence; the involuntary antipathy! how often do they precede our visual recognition! It was scarcely possible to discover the recumbent form of Idalie in the gloom of the willow brake; yet the figure paused not in its approach to where she sat; and the eager, though mute embrace, showed how truly their hearts recognized the deep feelings that it needed no tongue to tell.

"And are we met again, my Idalie?" said Roallan, after indulging in that silent rapture in which he had clasped her to his breast. "What have I not dreaded on your account; you have suffered torture, dishonor, and every misery of this savage land, in my anxious thoughts as well as in my dreams, until I have been driven almost to madness. Let us fly together to where no lawless hand can separate us, and where I may make you the idol of every thought—the worshiped of every eye. How that answering pressure thrills! but may I not hear that voice which sounds so doubly sweet where all else is rude and dangerous?" "When I saw you last," she answered, "I nursed strange hopes and feelings; yet I know not that I should tell my day dreams, in which you lived, mixed with all that was happy in the future and anxious in the present; has my brother told you?" "He has informed me of your tie of kindred," answered her companion. "Well, what have we to fear, now you are safe? Does my red blood make you doubt my faith? Though the young men of the Blackfeet woo, am I so inconstant as to wish to yield, or so friendless as to be compelled? You think me bold; alas! I am what Nature made me—nursed in savage life, and little taught." "My own Idalie! I would not change—no, not the smallest particle of what I so love; but is there no room for fear? Are we not surrounded by danger? Am I aware of your brother's views? Flight is our surest hope. There are lands where the sun should shine but for our joys—where there should be no bonds but those of love—where Luxury should wait on all our wants. I have thought of all—planned all; there wants not means, and I have friends; the distance to my camp is not great, and thence the road is clear. Your father will not object, for I have sounded him; be not ruled, therefore, by a proud and wayward brother, to undo the happiness of one who loves you better than ten thousand brothers." The hand he held trembled in his grasp. "To-morrow night we will find the same means to meet; then I will tell you; but, indeed, I can not now. Bear a little with me," she added, as he was about to interrupt her. "Altowan himself would now leave the tribe if we could get safely off; and, indeed, his chief care has hitherto been for you." "Idalie," said Roallan—and his voice was slightly altered—"we can not journey with your brother; to be under his guardianship and direction—to have his control to thwart me—would sour our intercourse. Oh! let me fly to where you alone, will command my wishes and my will." "I will not tell him of what you propose," she answered; "but, indeed, I must see what his views are: to-morrow night."

There were now some figures to be seen approaching. Idalie glided from the side of Roallan, and he was unconscious of her departure as he rose to watch their movements. They passed, engrossed with other matters; and when he turned to reassure his companion, she was gone, and it was vain to attempt to follow. Would he peril all on the decision of that night, or wait the promised interview? There was, amid all the softness—and he would not doubt the love of Idalie—a decision of character that he feared to rouse; and he began to feel uneasy for the success of his original plans. It could not be supposed, that educated as he had been—the heir to high rank and unbounded wealth; for he had never yet known limits to its supplies—he should think of bringing home to the exclusive circle in which he moved in England, a savage maiden, however beautiful, as his wedded wife. In the first wakening of his love, no such thought had crossed him; and the custom of the country sanctioned periodical contracts of marriage, if such connection should be so called. The needy and reckless father, could well approve such a bond; and the dower in these cases, given by the lover, could not fail to attract his natural cupidity; but here had sprung up a new guardian, in the character of a brother, who might be evaded, but could scarcely be openly opposed. On the chance of flight then, alone might rest his hopes. These thoughts, more than his own imminent danger at the hands of the discontented and blood-thirsty party who sought his death as a means of overthrowing Altowan, occupied his mind as he lay beneath the slight shelter of skins and gazed forth on the calm heavens. "To-morrow, then, to-morrow!" he repeated, as he yielded to that sleep which the fatigues of the day and the habits of the country, scarce permit to be long deferred.

It had been understood that the camp would be moved on the morrow, and the preparations were to commence soon after the rising of the sun. It was not intended to go far; but to change the scene from that unlucky spot, and to obtain a fresh range for their horses farther down the valley. The old man whose power had been exerted the evening before to thwart Altowan, was now full of courteous deference, consulting him as to the proposed movement, and conceding the advantage that might accrue to them from the proposed ransom of Roallan. Messengers were about to be sent to the camp of the whites; and it appeared that Pinatsi should be one, as he could more easily gain admission, and could more clearly stipulate the place of receiving the goods, as well as their description and amount—Roallan merely furnishing him with a letter to Mr. Stay requesting him to obey their demands. Although there might be treachery beneath this specious guise, yet it was evidently the only means that presented itself of gaining the liberation of Roallan without the dangerous experiment of precipitate flight.

The motley line of loaded animals, and the lodge-poles dragged along, attached to each side of the saddle; the women's horses, caparisoned with their gaudy trappings and tinkling bells; the braves, in groups, proceeding with more dignified and restrained demeanor; the youths, running short courses on the half-wild colts committed to their care; the soldiers or police, keeping back those who were pressing too eagerly on the leader; the neighing of the loose troops, that ever and anon, broke forward to snatch the opportunity of browsing ere the crowd advanced; the videttes, now planted on the heights in front and on the flanks, and then dashing on to skim the horizon from the eminence beyond; the lance, with its streamer of dark human hair; and the polished musket, glancing in the sunbeam—presented a living picture, backed by the mountain outline, scarcely in any other region to be equaled. In the strange mixture of the gay, though serious, and the sad, any humor might meet its fellow; thoughtless youth had its swing; the chivalrous bearing of that season, but little more advanced in human life, which is brought out by accident, is but a step to the graver character of the confirmed and successful warrior; mature age and pretension to wisdom follow; but danger has thinned the rank, and of those who remain of age to look for respect and claim a former renown, but few are heeded. They may beat the drum to the scalp-dance, but their voice ceases to be feared, and unless feared, it is never obeyed.

Idalie rode by some of the young women of the tribe, but entered not into their joys, and scarcely into the sadness that recent events had bred in almost every family of the camp; apparently preoccupied, her eyes, hid under their long, downcast lids, which shaded them from the bright beams of day, were seldom raised, except when the bounding of her steed occasionally animated them in her endeavors to restrain his eagerness or calm his fire. There wanted not the young, the handsome, and the brave, who circled around so attractive a group; and glances of admiration beamed from many a dark eye. Pinatsi was of the number who followed in the train of beauty, though almost heedless of the attraction; but his attention was called by the voice of young Loui, who informed him that his father and Altowan, wished to see him. It was to arrange the messengers for the white camp, and the ransom; and such was the suspicion of both parties, that they wished them to be selected and dispatched without any possibility of private orders. The affair was easily completed while the cavalcade continued its route.

It wanted still two hours of noon, when the leaders of the village sat themselves down on a small peninsula formed by the stream, where the grass was fresh and green, and a few trees threw over them a cooling shade, to smoke the first pipe in the new encampment—the squaws, the mean while, selecting spots suited to their various choice, for the construction of such shelter as they had the means to form, until time was afforded to dress the skins for new lodges, of which most had a considerable store. The sun sunk to rest, and the hum of evening succeeded to the bustle of busy day; when Idalie sallied out to find, through the means of Watoe, where she could fulfill her appointment with Roallan. Her eyes had been opened by an interview with her brother, who was already aware of the proposal of her lover. He had—in her belief, with mysterious knowledge—stated at a guess, the tenor of his plan, and placed his design in such a light as to alarm the pride of his sister, and to increase her confidence in his advice. It was therefore, with painful and conflicting feelings, that she sought the Broadashe. No one had heard of him; his unsettled habits and want of a regular home rendered it difficult to light on him; but she knew he would never be long far away from her brother, to whom he appeared delighted to render such little services as his feminine occupations taught him to perform. Almost despairing of finding him, and afraid to attract notice, she was returning homeward, when she saw a man leading a horse from the river bank that was wet with recent washing or perspiration. He hesitated to let her come up to where their paths crossed. It was Watoe. "Say nothing," he said, "of having seen me with a wet horse; but go down to the bank where the trees hang over the water, at that bend." He passed on, apparently unwilling to delay; and it was not long before he made Roallan understand, amid his usual foolery, that he might meet once more upon the green turf, the fair object of his love.

Altowan sat musing by the fire; but the whole manner of Watoe was changed the moment they were alone. "You are betrayed, but Watoe is faithful," he began; "I was with them when they made their plan; they come not back here, but carry off what booty they can get, and join the Little Robe on the waters of Salmon River. I heard some words and followed; they thought I had joined them, but my horse took the way back, and I am here to tell you." In a moment the whole scheme appeared open to Altowan, and he felt it necessary to act with corresponding promptitude; but we leave them to follow the lovers to the scene of meeting.

It was already late, when we find, by the earnest tones of Roallan, that the suit was still to be urged which he had began the night before; although she, in whose ear his impassioned words were far from being indifferent, could scarcely help lingering to hear the often repeated vows. The hands that sought each other's touch, still communicated the thrill of love—as vivid in these wilds as in the halls of luxury and pomp—which in years to come, amid the changes of scene and the charms of another land, was to live cherished in the remembrance of both. Thus they might have passed hours on that green bank, unheeding aught but the ecstatic feeling which enchained them to each other's side. From behind one of the trees under which they sat, there came at last a noiseless step, and a lofty figure stood over them so close as to touch them with his robe; in a moment Roallan was on his feet, but a sign from the intruder showed it was a friend. The Indian spoke; it was Perahoe. "Altowan waits you in his hut," he said to Idalie; "and you, white chief, must follow me. There is news that concerns your safety." He paused, in expectation that his notification would be immediately attended to; and there was a shortness in his manner which conveyed more than words, that he expected a prompt attention to the sudden summons. It was evident to both, that the interview was for this night at an end; but Roallan would still have chosen to prolong it, by accompanying her as soon as she explained the purport of the message. She well knew however, that Altowan would not have sent lightly on such an occasion; and she felt that the life of her lover might be endangered by present hesitation. "Indeed you must go now, and go without weakening me any more; we shall meet soon if, as I guess, we are now on the verge of escape. He has promised, and his words are true; follow where Perahoe guides; you have no treachery to fear from him. I am again myself; you need not fear for me." And as she spoke, her light step was turned in a contrary direction to that whicht he Indian pointed out to Roallan.

It was not without some trouble that Roallan was made aware it was necessary to shroud himself in his robe, and imitate the movements of his guide, who took a course toward the opposite side of the village from the river, conversing in a natural tone, as if with one who understood him, when within the limits of observation. They thus passed several groups and individual idlers, without remark; and had nearly reached the outskirts, when they were met by a single Indian. He was crossing their path, but stopped suddenly and watched their approach; when, perhaps recognizing Perahoe, he continued his course. Their steps were now increased in length and speed, without actually amounting to a run; and it was not long before they arrived at one of those small water-courses which furrowed the side of the valley, but was now dry.

Stooping down to nearly a level with the ground, they remained for some time on the watch; but no form or sound, betrayed the approach of any one; and Roallan began to wonder at the inflexible patience of his companion. A slight motion of his hand, pointing farther up, denoted that he had perceived something to attract his attention in that quarter, and they resumed their course in that direction; proceeding some four hundred yards, they again halted. To Roallan's sense of sight and hearing, they were no nearer their object than before; but the eye of Perahoe pierced farther into the surrounding obscurity than that of his companion. The long shade of wood hung beneath the crowning precipice; and against its dull gloom he perceived some objects of intenser darkness, and there was no farther hesitation in his approach. Altowan had waited some time; few words passed between him and Perahoe, and he drew nearer Roallan. There were two horses, the cords of which he held in his hand. "With the confidence," he said, "that may be put in one who ought to be a man of honor, I am about to place in your care the fate of a sister whom I value more than any thing on the earth; do not interrupt me, I have not much to say, nor time to choose my words. Your life is here hanging by a single hair; your message for ransom has been sent by traitors. I follow by another route to counteract their scheme, and by leaving a plainer trail, divert pursuit; you proceed by a more secluded way, and you have Watoe for a guide, who knows every step. If the Great Spirit wills, we will meet three nights hence at the rendezvous; and now, and here, I tell you, that alive or dead, I shall there and then, demand Idalie pure and unsullied at your hands. She will meet you below." He held out his hand. "Do you accept the trust?" Roallan, who had been at first almost staggered by the suddenness of the address, and the solemn, low tone in which the haughty chief was subdued in the anxious brother, answered, "I do." Their hands were clasped for a moment; Roallan's, when relieved from that crushing grasp, fell by his side; and before there was time for farther question, the dark and mysterious spirit that he felt governed his present destiny, was gone.

The moon had not yet risen, but the starlight night was scarcely adapted for concealment without constant precaution. Each taking a horse, the two proceeded in silence toward the spot where Altowan had promised they should meet Idalie. It was not above a mile from the camp, but they had to make a considerable circuit to reach it without risk of observation.

The swollen river here, ran swiftly over a rocky bed, and some large blocks hung darkly over its banks; again they paused. Roallan leaned against the cold granite in deep attention, his new-born hopes and anxious fears combating in his beating breast; the Indian earnestly using his senses, sharpened by continual use, stretched on the ground, lay in immovable watchfulness. It was evident that the impatience of Roallan, was most intense; and that of Perahoe, though more under command, could be perceived in the short breathing which slightly agitated his form. In this state they had remained a considerable time; a gentle, cooling breeze, came up the valley; and the horses, hitherto standing with drooping heads and in a posture of sluggish listlessness, at first detected the cautious approach of those whom they awaited. The ears at first bent forward in calm attention, then a gradually increasing interest was betrayed in their attitudes, some time before even the Indian was sensible of any sign. At length the two figures could be plainly distinguished, and were rapidly nearing the appointed spot. Perahoe was up and the horses ready. Idalie came up with a manner somewhat flurried, and addressed Roallan, in a low and embarrassed voice, the few words—"We must waste no time." Watoe made some observation to his companion, who mounted and disappeared, while Roallan and Idalie followed their guide, who, crossing the stream, galloped up the other side, taking care to avoid any path on which their trail might be traced.

The ground over which that motley cavalcade had marched the day before, in their slow and tedious route, was quickly passed; the encampment of yesterday lay in their way, its desolate vestiges scarcely discernible; the gorged wolf silently skulked from their path, and before the bridle was drawn or their horses breathed, they were at the entry of the steep ascent whence the view of the village had been first beheld by Altowan and Idalie on their return. By the position of the stars, it was evident that midnight was passed, and that the rising of the moon might soon be expected to light their progress through the pines. Watoe halted in the willow thicket in which he had met Altowan when he had learned his relationship to Idalie; their horses were concealed in its shades, and he sat himself down on that spot where they had sat before. His appearance was somewhat serious compared with his usual reckless gayety; and it was now, that for the first time, Roallan addressed the partner of his flight as he spread her robe upon the mossy roots of the bush, under which he invited her to repose until their horses were refreshed and they should have a better light by which to thread the forest. The restraint of his manner was evident in the short observation he made on the prospect of their safe journey and the ordinary perils of the route; but under this surface, doubts and fears were busy, and took from his expressions the character of confidence and support which he meant they should convey. On the part of Idalie there was more frankness and even freedom than usual; her spirit seemed to mount with the occasion, and triumph over the hollow support her companion attempted to furnish by his remarks.

Perhaps it was the light of the moon, which had just risen as they prepared to resume their course, that threw a silvery white over her beautiful features, and brought out the lustrous darkness of her eyes. The horses picked their way through the rocks and fallen timber that checked their progress. It was scarcely probable that pursuit could already have commenced; but silence and continual watch are the guides of Indian travel; and the ear must be ever open that can detect, in the modulations of the distant wolf howl, the communicating signal of attack, and learn from the croak of the startled raven, the nearness of danger. The wind that thunders through the chasm, the cataract that roars from the deep recess, the breeze that murmurs in the darkling grove, surround the wanderer with all their variety of wild and solemn sound; but the voice of animal nature is for the most part mute, save at the season when the noble stag, seeking his mate, emits his sharp cry as he plunges through the deep ravine, or challenges his rival to mortal combat;* or when the vast herds of buffalo congregate, with excited passions, at the summer solstice, and fill the night air with their lowing. That night, however, there was no sound to startle conjecture or confirm apprehension of danger; but the continued silence was more irksome to those whose senses were intensely bent upon listening, than the presage, or even the presence of misfortune. Thus they proceeded through many a scene of virgin beauty and savage magnificence, adopting occasionally the path of the buffalo, but shunning the passes frequented by man. At last the stars began to fade; and though the view of the eastern horizon was shut out by a stupendous barrier, the deep blue of heaven was rapidly giving way to the dawn.

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* The Wapati deer, commonly called the elk among the Americans, has a sharp, though loud cry, approaching a whistle, totally different from the low bellow of the European red deer, of corresponding appearance, but smaller size.

There was a bold height before the fugitives, over which lay their shortest course; and Watoe paused, as if in hesitation whether they should attempt to pass, as they viewed it through an open in the pines; but apparently doubting the prudence of such an exposure, he turned, and bore down to where the rocks encircled a small, flat space, on which grew a grove of young quaking ash, whose tall, white stems crowded together, and where the green turf looked fresh under the influence of a tardy spring. A small rill at the head, fell almost noiselessly over the slimy moss that covered the rock into a clear basin, and thence meandered through the little plain. These places are often marked by the encampments of such small parties as their seclusion suits, both on account of the sweeter grass, and their being always in those spots where the snow breaks down the trees, or the elk and the porcupine strip the bark, leaving much dead timber of a convenient size to form a small fort, or an inclosure for horses. One of these, of a very old date, occupied an open space in the grove, but of materials much decayed. Near it lay the bones of several buffalo and the horns of an elk, bleached by more than one winter, which had probably belonged to animals who had perished in the snows above, and had been deposited there, arrested by the thick growth of the aspen in the descent of the torrent. The old fort, formed of larger trunks, laid after the fashion of a log house, contracted in the shape of a pyramid as it rose, so as to form a shelter under every side of the square within, while the interstices were filled from without by smaller branches, so as to render it impervious to arrows, or even balls. Into this the saddles were laid, after the horses had been hoppled; and Idalie gathered some charred wood for kindling a fire, should one be wanted, while Watoe went out to watch from some neighboring eminences for the signs of pursuit.

The frank and confiding, though at the same time stern, manner of Altowan, had such an influence over Roallan, that he forbore to urge his suit to his fair companion, and he even endeavored to convince himself that it was an evanescent passion, as such difficulties were raised by his own pride to a marriage, and by that of Altowan, as well as his sister, to any other connection; so that when reflecting on his position on their dark journey, or away from her presence, he almost brought himself to the belief that he could bear a separation, if no circumstance should favor those wishes of his heart which he scarce avowed, even to himself.

There appeared to be neither man nor beast astir within the space that could be swept by the naked eye. The sun already shone unobstructed, upon the hilly country of the Crows on the far left, though the ravine in which they were, was enveloped in shade; and the care with which all places had been avoided where a trail could be left, gave full assurance against immediate danger. Roallan descended to the stream, and bathed himself, according to Indian custom, in one of the granite basins of its bed, before he repaired to the spot where he had left the horses. There he found Idalie, who had also made her morning toilet, and was yet busy braiding her luxuriant hair. He stood near her; and as she looked upon that gaze of admiration, and met those beaming eyes, there was a scarce perceptible heightening of color, as she said, "We will make a valuable captive; I see you are already eyeing my tangled tresses; and they will make a good prize with yours and poor Watoe's; see, I am preparing mine!" She spoke with a light indifference, which, in spite of himself, sounded strange to his ear in the voice of a female. "You say '*evil*,' dearest Idalie, and yet you show no fear, nor even regret, at such a horrible companionship of trophies; but, trust me, yours, at least, shall wave in many a summer's breeze, if mine should grace a barbarous triumph." "Not so; they will look best together," she said, as her dark eye for a moment dwelt on the light brown locks that adorned that high brow, and on which the first stray sunbean shed a golden tinge. How strange, in one he had ever found so pure, to talk with such indifference of a savage mutilation after a violent death! She rose, and took from the back of her saddle a small bundle of dried meat, as Watoe approached; and they sat down to eat on that short, green turf.

They formed a group of rare and striking beauty—the two men both perfect of their race, and she uniting their opposite perfections. Watoe, who had assumed the dress, or, rather, undress of a man, lighted the pipe, and Idalie laid herself down under the shade of the fort to repose.

Roallan, who, having ended the rite of the calumet, understood from his companion that he would watch until midday, when he was to succeed, now rolled himself in his robe—perhaps to sleep, perhaps to indulge in waking dreams—while Watoe sat perched on the rock that formed the highest point of the wall that surrounded them, to perform the function of guard.

It was almost twilight when they were again under way, and a short space brought them to the open already mentioned. Roallan had shown even willfulness in urging their departure; and it could scarcely be called dark before they were out of the cover of the woods. Watoe held back, so as to be within hearing of Idalie just before they emerged, and said, "We are now open to all eyes; the white chief thinks I am afraid; my heart is strong, but he is not wise. What is it that I die? I am a brave; but if any one reaches the whites, tell Altowan my voice was not heard." A moment after, and he was singing one of those low airs which are common among the Indians. For the first time since their departure, the courage of Idalie began to falter, and a sensation of undefined uneasiness took the place of her former feeling of security. They passed the open at a rapid pace, and nothing occurred but the startling of three bulls which they encountered in a hollow. Their speed, however, was increased as Watoe observed how distinctly their dark forms were discernible in the doubtful twilight; their road was now more open, and the hills over which it lay, but partially covered with wood. They still pressed on in silence; but the darkness prevented their making very rapid progress in the pines. The breeze, which had freshened at sundown, and blew strong and steadily on their backs as they passed over the bare upland, was now increasing into a tempestuous gale; and darkness came on to stop them, or embarrass their advance, save where an occasional flash of red light that preceded the rolling thunders, glared through the heaving forest; and it became almost impossible either to recognize a course, or urge on their startled steeds among the crashing of falling timber and the roaring hurricane. The direction of the storm, which for some time had been a guide, now baffled their efforts to discover their way; when, coming upon a young growth which had succeeded to the devastation of some former tempest, they crowded together there in temporary security.

It was some hours before the violence of the storm passed away, and they still remained huddled together. As the gusts came at longer intervals, and the thunder peals became more distant, an occasional break appeared in the clouds, and there was every token of a favorable change; at last the low moon broke through the dispersing vapors, and Watoe looked out on the indistinct horizon to discover how far they had diverged from their route, while his companions were preparing to mount. They were considerably to the right of the course he had intended to pursue, having entered a valley that led toward *the Little Hole*, which being the most direct, is also the most frequented road from the Tetons to the Susquadee. It was now more than probable that the pursuit had been retarded in the same measure as the flight; and the more prudent course would be to lay by until it might pass. But the eagerness of Roallan was here joined with that of Idalie; and Watoe yielded, as he could not forsake them at such a moment. An open space again presented itself before them, stretching along one side of the hollow, at the top of which was the pass into the other valley. They advanced cautiously, skirting its side to keep within its shade, and at the same time be free from the entanglements of the wood; but before they had proceeded far, Roallan rushed up to the side of Idalie and seized her rein, pointing to the tall forms of several Indians which appeared for a moment in the moonlight before them, and dashing onward in an oblique direction, heedless of the unwillingness of Watoe, made for the upper end, so as to be over the summit before the party which appeared on foot could overtake them. But the rocks and obstructions of the pass were insurmountable in the night at the spot where they entered the wood. To continue on in another direction seemed the only chance to escape; and Roallan, who began to doubt Watoe's fidelity, from the indifference he showed to their danger, continued to lead. There was to the left a broken space, where occasional opens and tufts of willow, offered a better chance of flight. He plunged on, closely followed by Idalie; and the way seemed to grow clearer as they advanced, but turned considerably to the left, until it showed a clear descent into another valley, which ran parallel to that which they had left. It was the best movement they could make to mislead the pursuit of those who must have seen them take another direction; and by the time they had descended into the timber so far as to be obliged to moderate their speed from its thickness, they must have gained a start upon their pursuers that would almost insure them from being overtaken. Each occupied by his own thoughts, they held on in silence until the glen began to narrow, and overhanging precipices threw their dark shadows on their rugged way. At a break in the trees however, they suddenly perceived that the open prairie stretched in front, and that they had not far to go before they would be again on the course of the evening before, on the north of the mountain range whose waters on that side flow into the country of the Crows. It was now necessary, from the lateness of the hour, to look for a shelter before the light should surprise them where there was no concealment; and a spot offered itself at the junction of a smaller branch with the stream they were descending. It was under an overhanging rock of great height, that they found a pile of stones, which had been once built up in the form of a breast-work, only partially fallen, and within which there was a semicircular space, protected from above by the jutting crag from which the blocks had fallen. It stood upon a shelf somewhat elevated from the bottom of the pass, and commanded the only passage by which they could ascend the bed of either of the torrents.

The character of Roallan had seemed to change since their first departure from the camp; and he now assumed a tone of decision which, if it checked the softer intercourse that lovers might wish to hold in scenes of retirement and beauty, was still more consistent with the danger of their situation. Without consultation, he led the horses to the foot of the rock, and taking off the saddles, gave them to Watoe to take to a place of safety and concealment, which he pointed out to him on the opposite side; while, assisted by Idalie, he replaced the stones that were wanting to make up a sufficient height in the rude defense of their shelter. When Watoe returned from disposing of their animals, he entered the inclosure at a bound. It was completely secure from any attack unless by assault, and his quick eye ran over the simple preparations for defense; but restless, he was in a moment out again, examining in the increasing light, the appearances of the paths that joined in the dell below. On his return, he pointed to Roallan the road that intersected from the left, their morning's course, showing what should have been their way had the tempest and subsequent alarm not altered their route. Idalie, to whom the Blackfoot language was familiar, now reminded him, as she saw the reproachful expression which lurked in his aspect as he communicated his observations, that they might at least trust they were free from the pursuit of one danger, alluding to the Indians seen in the open glade. It was with a smile, in which pity, and perhaps resignation, were strangely mingled, that Watoe answered, "The eyes of the white chief are deceived when they stand looking at you; elk are often mistaken, in the dark or at a distance, for men; but Watoe's eyes have been much exercised in the night. I saw them turn to bound into the shade; but we are here."

"It is hard to persuade a man against his eyesight," was the answer of Roallan, when Idalie explained the assertion of the Broadashe; "but I must watch; I do not altogether believe that half boy." "Show not your suspicion, at least," said Idalie, as she saw by Watoe's kindling eye that he felt affronted at his woodcraft being undervalued; "he is both brave and true." She leaned against her saddle, and her falling eyelids betokened the drowsiness that follows fatigue.

The morning sun was shining on the plains, though as yet it gladdened not the recesses of the ravine, and Roallan had kept guard some time, while his companions slept under the protection of their rude rampart, when he was startled by the appearance of a dark object, which moved slowly through the trees on the edge of the stream. It was occasionally hid from his view; and when it reappeared, seemed to be drawing nearer. He was about to awake Watoe, when it showed itself more plainly to be an animal of some size, just as he lost sight of it behind a large fragment of rock. His hand had instinctively cocked his rifle, and he awaited its approach. The stream ran along a low ledge of rock; and while he kept his eye on the mass farther up that obstructed his view, a huge bear appeared right before him, in the bed of the torrent. The surprise that such a sight causes in an eager and unpracticed hunter, threw him off his guard, and he fired. The wounded monster, who ever dreads an unseen foe, rolled in the water with a low roar; but recovering, rushed up the opposite bank, while Roallan was reloading the barrel he had discharged. His companions had started up at the report, which still reverberated among the crags as if unable to escape from their deep recesses, when Roallan began to be aware of the consequences of his imprudence, as he perceived the bear making for the thicket behind which their horses had been concealed; and he had bounded out of the fort before his purpose could be divined or prevented by its startled inmates. To control sudden impulse is the sole effort of Indian education; but it was a severe struggle for the ardent Watoe to remain with Idalie while he saw a pale face by whom he thought himself doubted or despised, plunge into immediate danger while he should remain inactive. Roallan had but too truly feared that the horses would break loose when they perceived the scent of the ferocious animal, who, furious from a severe wound, plunged into the low copse in which they were tied. Their cords snapped like pack-thread as he rolled in agony, crushing the under-growth; and they were already snorting with terror, with head and tail erect, and flowing manes, scouring through the open pines. The dismayed cause of the disaster beheld their flight, and rushed on with despairing speed; but on gaining the summit of the rise, could see no trace of them. Determined however, to follow on the only way they could have taken, he bore up against the desponding feeling which crept upon him, and ran on, with straining eye, through the silent pines. High precipices hung over on either side, and occasional detached fragments broke the even surface of the plane as it sloped gently upward.

On a larger mass of rock, which seemed to have been reft from the side of the parent crag, and stood isolated in the narrow vale, a group of argali were posted, in the security of an inaccessible pinnacle, eyeing with motionless scrutiny the intruder on their remote domain; but though for the first time seen by the pre-occupied youth, their wild and picturesque appearance was unheeded. A panther that had crouched in his path was scarcely noticed as it fled, with its peculiar long bounds, till it sprang on to the limb of a not far distant tree. Still he rushed on, occupied but with the hope of repairing the loss which his rashness had occasioned. He beheld at last before him, the termination of his hope: there was no outlet to the ravine he had ascended; surrounding precipices frowned on every side; and with a chill at heart, he stopped, deeming farther survey useless, and attempted to awake new energies to meet the occasion. The recollection of the dangerous spot in which he had left Idalie, came upon him almost as a relief, in diverting the current of his thoughts from self-accusation, and hurried his step as he retraced his way.

There appeared on his right hand, after he had returned half way to the pass into the valley, a small green glade, where a few birch grew, and the entrance to which had been hidden by an angle, as he passed up in his fruitless search. He turned toward it with scarce a hope, and entered the green recess, which, though full of obstructions, might be the way through which the horses had escaped, or the trap in which they might be retaken. He passed over the dry and hard soil of the pines, and entered, with a beating heart, the narrow gorge, where he plainly saw their hoof marks; but they might still have escaped above. A few steps, and he perceived them feeding on the thick sward that surrounded a fountain which bubbled from the earth, shaded by the birch and the cedar, and the cool air refreshed with the perfume of the cherry, which flowered late in that sequestered dell. He approached with caution to where they browsed with eagerness that delicious herbage, occasionally raising their heads, as if not yet free from their late alarm. It was now that necessity taught him the caution habitual to the mountain wanderer; and he crept like a snake, as near as any shelter would permit, in hopes of being able to lay hold of one of the ropes that trailed from their necks. It was not long before an opportunity offered, and one was within his reach; but the startled animal, snorting with terror, rushed from him as if he had never seen the face of man. Roallan still held by the cord, and was borne along. His grip was that of despair, while his extraordinary activity enabled him to keep from falling; but fortune, for once that morning, seemed to favor him at his utmost need. As the animal which carried him forward in his mad career, was obliged to turn short, owing to obstructing rocks and timber that had filled up the end of the ravine, he had now a power upon him in the bend that he had not when directly behind; but, unwilling to trust to the chance of being again towed along and dashed against intervening objects, he sprang at him as he faced round, and catching the flowing mane, was on his back at a single bound. Gathering up the cord and leaning over his neck, he threw a noose over his nose, and succeeded in reining him in, before he had cleared the narrow glen. Not having perceived the other two in his rapid retreat, it was evident that they were still inclosed in the recess; and he cautiously returned, to regain his rifle and to make for their concealment. They had turned up an open which appeared to offer a way of escape, and he found them quieted by his appearing with their companion. It seemed a safe concealment, that in which they were, and he secured them there, to wait their being wanted at evening, and hurried back to reassure his companions of their safety. The time taken up in this exploit was not long, and Roallan returned toward the fort with exulting speed. From some unaccountable motive however, he did not take the direct course to the refuge he had left; but wishing to surprise or to test the vigilance of the garrison, crossed the valley somewhat higher up, in order to arrive at the rock on the same side of the stream, and approach through the fallen fragments unobserved.

It was well for him that his impatience had urged him along, and rendered him a difficult mark. The report of several fire-arms rung in his ear, and he felt his body grazed by a bullet. A naked Indian was cutting off his retreat to the rugged shelter which it was now his only chance of safety to reach. Roallan had been rarely equalled in speed in those trials in which it had been the care of his father to encourage him and his own pride to exult; and now it was, that his own life and all he held dear, hung upon his speed. The contest could not be long; but any one who has set his life on such a stake, can only tell the feelings with which he strained, while the war whoop rang through the echoing glen. But the chance of reaching a position from which he might have time to defend himself before his pursuers came up, was almost too small for hope, as he had to ascend, while his most dangerous foe had but an easy declivity to enable him to interrupt his course. Roallan turned toward the right, as he found his adversary approaching at right angles, with a prospect of being too near to allow him to enter the broken ground without exposing himself to deliberate aim, when his pace might be retarded by the difficulties of the footing among the confused piles of rock before him. The change of direction, gave him an equal advantage of ground; but his pursuers were closing around him, and the one nearest the rocks was too close to allow him to reach a place of security, as he would be upon him on the least check in his speed. He ran on however, in desperation, though ready to take any chance which might present itself. A hole, occasioned by a decayed root, in which his foot sunk at this juncture, decided the fortune of the chase; and after an unavailing effort to save himself, he came to the ground. Before he could recover himself, the nearest Indian was upon him; but he had time to face his foe, though his rifle had dropped from his hold when he fell. His adversary, rushing up to plant his muzzle at his breast, was met by the spring of a panther. His weapon was grasped before it could be discharged, and the Indian was in a moment swung round in the air, and flung against a stump with such violence as to deprive him of all sensation. Retaining the undischarged weapon of the savage, and picking up his own, a few bounds brought him among the broken fragments and bushes which ran along the base of the steep above. Among these, where the bear or the wolf might cavern, he found a place that could either serve as a refuge or a grave. The whoop had ceased which had so lately breathed anticipated triumph; for the Indian well knows how dangerous is a desperate man at bay.

Roallan had time to fill up some crevices and prepare his arms, while some of the most daring of his assailants, after a short council, began to approach from the upper side, what was likely to be the last resting-place of their prey. When Roallan began to recover his breath, and found himself confined as if in a cage, to be baited without hope of escape or quarter—unsustained by active exertion and surrounded by the ominous silence which conceals, with patient caution, the fatal approach of the savage—he felt as if he would rather rush out and offer his life against any odds, than suffer that cold suspense; but the remembrance of the situation of Idalie came upon him and resolved his doubts, as the delay he could occasion, might be the means of securing her flight. He had two pistols, a double-barreled rifle, and the prize he had just taken from the overthrown Indian, wherewith to stand a siege; and while these reflections were rapidly passing in his mind, he thought he could perceive through a loop-hole he had but partially filled up in the part of the cavern the most remote from its low and crooked entrance, the movement of a branch of cedar, which could not be occasioned by a current of air. It was not above ten steps from the aperture, and was again still. Something dark however, appeared behind it, and he kept his eyes fixed on the object. While thus engaged, his whole senses strained in painful tension, a soft sound, as if of the drawing of a robe over the adjoining rock, attracted his attention, but he could see nothing. At this moment a shot came from behind the cedar branch, and a suppressed moan sounded close to his ear; the concealment fell, and a savage could be plainly discerned reloading, though no part but his head appeared in view. Roallan's rifle was steadied by the rock, and in the calmness of despair he fired; when the smoke cleared there was nothing visible, and he proceeded to recharge. The report and the smoke showed where he was concealed; and he could now discover several dark forms appearing around, as if meditating a rush, though never showing themselves so as to give him an opportunity to shoot; but it was evident that the change of position which occasioned these glimpses brought his enemies nearer, and he felt that the crisis of his fate was coming on, and that no chance of checking their advance was to be lost. Having taken up the Indian gun to try its aim, he adjusted it on the rock, and as his eye ran along its barrel, an unguarded movement exposed the body of one of his besiegers, passing in an open between two rocks. He fired, but it was impossible to know with what effect, though he could now discover no living object among the masses that were piled around. In this state of watchfulness and suspense he remained, scarcely moving for a considerable time, checking that desire of action, which though in desperate situations it seems to rush upon destruction, often saves where prudence and fortitude would fail.

The crevice—through which, serving as loophole as well as look-out, there was but a circumscribed view—was in the direction of the lofty cliff that overhung the side of the glen. The entrance was low and difficult at the opposite end; but he looked wistfully toward it, as for the first time, the idea of a blockade presented itself, as indicated by that deceitful calm. Without thought or plan he placed his pistols in his belt, and grasping his rifle, prepared to leave his dark retreat; and in doing so, was turning his powder-horn on his back to creep with less noise or obstruction, when he perceived that the stopper had been left out. He shook the horn—it was empty! He had moved toward the entrance with undefined intent, but now paused; and it was with a smile that he adjusted himself for a *sortie;* for he knew the worst, and looked calmly on the dark train that marked in the dust and gravel, where he had lost his last means of protracted resistance, and recognized in it the omen that such an effort was vain. There were now in his movements neither the hurry of flight nor the tardiness of doubt. He was to go forth, making every effort to escape—at worst, to die in the light of day. There were not many paces between the cavern and the open from whence he had been driven; and on his hands and knees, placing his rifle softly down, so as the hand that held it should also do its alternate part in his support, he crept as low and as hidden as the nature of the piled rocks would permit, and regained the open ground without seeing any one, and he hoped without being seen. Along the margin of the pines and under the shelter of the detached blocks that had fallen beyond the upper mass, the way to descend the valley was clear; and could he have been aware that there was nothing to intercept his flight, and no danger to his companions, his swiftness might have given him the best chance for securing his escape.

To reach another place of concealment, and thus baffle search until night, was the only chance that presented itself to his mind as he crept along. The sun was getting high, though the trees through which it forced its rays at intervals, were sufficient to darken in their general shade the objects beneath; but his hope was here startled by the appearance of a form that lay under a tree, still as a portion of the trunk above, and reclined in a position where a single eye might sweep the unencumbered slope, and by the slightest signal convey an alarm. He was close upon the watchman before he discovered him, and was evidently unperceived. Raising his head a little, he thought he slept, and that he could lose nothing by being a little nearer. In an attempt to escape undiscovered, he passed on; but when abreast of the sentinel, the inequalities of the ground that before favored, could not farther protect him from complete exposure; and he gazed steadily at the face of the Indian, to discover if his repose was real or pretended. The eyes were half closed, but there was a black stream from the corner of the mouth, the sight of which checked the spring he was about to make to secure his sleep; that had been already done. His hopes rose, although his hands and knees would scarcely second his impatience. While thus pursuing his hazardous retreat, and starting like a fawn at every object of doubtful form, he thought he could perceive something moving swiftly to his right on the borders of the stream; it stopped, and soon after disappeared. Roallan lay flat upon the turf, hoping to avoid the eye of an enemy, and almost dreading more that of a friend; but he was still destined to suffer pangs of apprehension for another, which are more dreadful than those he had ceased to feel for himself, when from behind the body of a pine he saw approaching, without precaution or hesitation, a form he could never mistake.

With wild gestures he endeavored to stop her imprudent advance; and seeing them disregarded, unmindful of every risk, he rushed down to meet her with frantic speed. His appearance arrested her steps, and a color, deeper than he had ever before seen shining through the clear olive of her skin, burned on her cheeks; but recovering amid the eager warnings he addressed her to return, she told him they were for the present, safe; that the part of the gang who remained unhurt, had returned by the road that passed the fort where she had been concealed, and from the shelter of which she had seen their retreat. "But where is Watoe?" she added. "He left me when we heard the first shots." Roallan told her he had been penned up under a pile of rocks, and could see nothing. As they turned to search, the remembrance of that sound as of a robe dragging over the rough granite close by his ear, and that low moan, came chillingly upon him. He led the way in silence to the entrance of his temporary shelter, where low in the angle of two rocks, one of which formed the side of the cavern, lay the ill-fated Watoe, pale, but with a luster in his eye that it was almost painful to meet. Their voices had been recognized; but the undischarged rifle in his hand, showed he had been prepared still to sacrifice a victim. Roallan hung back, and his generous spirit bled when he remembered his former doubts. He could have endured a look of reproach, or a boast of aid yielded in the time of need; but the gentle and friendly smile—from which the languor of pain had hardly taken its reckless wile—with which the wounded youth turned toward him, after a few words with Idalia, was more than he could bear.

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It was on a small island in the adjoining stream that we find Idalie, Roallan, and the Broadashe, within an hour of sunset. Pain and the loss of blood, had lowered the sinking tones of Watoe, as he lay, his head supported on the knees of Roallan, and Idalie moistening his lips from the clear and sparkling torrent. They were shaded by some young pines, and concealed by birch and willow. It was a strange and interesting picture; the proud and heartless Roallan—yielding to the better, which, as well as the worst impulses of nature, govern the actions of man in savage life—hung over the waning form of that wild boy, and now would have given a province for his ransom from that fate his faithfulness to him had almost sealed, and which his own doubts had brought upon him.

Watoe spake low in the musical language of his tribe, and Idalie sat sadly listening to his words. He mentioned the names of several of the young women of the camp, with whom his habits permitted familiar intercourse in a life—though subject to occasional degradation—generally abandoned to reckless debauchery; but the strongest feeling of his heart was his affection for Altowan, and a complete change came over his countenance as he beckoned the ear of Idalie nearer, to catch his enfeebled tones. "I could bear," said he, "to think of leaving my young fame, and a life of joy, the glorious day, the glad evening, and the dreamy pleasures of the dark; I could look to the bright and distant prairies where I am going, and forget the hunting on the Blackfoot plains—the dance at sundown and the whispers of night; but there is one to whose ear I would were borne the last tidings of Watoe; and I shall sleep in peace by these bounding waters, though they flow not to the lands of my people." A momentary hectic suffused his features as he eagerly added, "Oh!

tell him—" but the eye, that had kindled with a dying flame, and the cheek that had ruddied with a setting glow, were fading; still there was a faint breathing, which lessened by degrees, so gently that they scarcely marked when he died.

CHAPTER II.

At the rendezvous, where is held that busy fair, where Indians, and scarce less savage whites, assemble in the broad valley of the Susquadee—to receive supplies, to bring in the fruits of the preceding hunts, and hold their wild revelry—the borders of the river are lined for miles with huts and lodges; the extended plain is covered with every species of steed, from the high-bred racer to the jaded pack-horse; the sullen mule, whose endurance is well-nigh run out, rolls in the dust with his lacerated hide; the large circle of surrounding heights is crowned with mounted videttes, whose forms rise clear and distinct against the sky, at whose distant signal of alarm the scene of repose is changed, and the scattered bands are hurried up, in clouds of dust, to the nearer protection of the vast encampment.

It was the evening of the day after the death of Watoe; the sun had some three hours before his course would be closed for the day; a guard, attending the horses of the whites, which grazed at the upper and western extremity of the plain, which there was narrow, was listlessly stretched beneath the willows that border Horse Creek, when he was roused by the sound of a shot not far distant; and on jumping up to ascertain its purport, perceived some Indians gathering toward a single horseman, who had apparently discharged his rifle as a token of peace. His appearance, which had excited no surprise where so many flock from all directions, was at the same time somewhat sudden; and a few signs having passed between him and Flatheads who offered the hand of friendship, he turned his course toward the white guard, who caught a horse and hastened to meet him, with that thirst for news which generally characterizes the class to which he belonged. The few words that passed were scarcely satisfactory to the Canadian; but he offered to accompany the new-comer to the quarter which was occupied by Mr. Stay, after whom he at once inquired. Various questions were answered by the stranger as they rode along, with unsatisfactory and evasive courtesy which puzzled his companion, while it excited him to continued interrogations. They met but few whites as they approached the lodges, and the Indians scarcely noticed them as they passed. Near

Pinatsi remained at the entrance, while Stay proceeded to a seat in the crowded circle. The subject which distracted his thoughts appeared also to occupy his guests, and various conjectures and reports had been circulated. It was generally believed, that Altowan had come as a spy to learn the movements of the hunting parties that yearly proceed toward the country of his adopted tribe; and many talked of the policy of detaining so powerful a chief, while others demanded an account of the news he had brought from the great village. It was not long before the accusation against Pinatsi was proclaimed; but it was also proposed to hear him, as he was already present; and the meeting began to wear the character of a court, who were to take upon themselves to decide a question in which they assumed the common safety was concerned, and in which the inexperience of Stay might lead him to a wrong conclusion. The engaging countenance of Pinatsi, who had also brought a considerable quantity of beaver which he wished to sell to the best advantage, procured him a certain degree of favor, especially among the French part of his audience; he reiterated the claims he had before advanced to Stay for being believed in preference to an enemy of the whites, and by his own adoption the head of a band of robbers and murderers; and added, that the jealousy of Roallan on account of Idalie, was another cause why he should wish his death, which would be the sure result of this delay, and that, after this warning, they would be the cause of his destruction if they did not authorize his departure. All this was explained by a French superintendent of an American company, and in such a way as not to lose force by the translation. Mr. Norman alone appeared unconvinced, from a former knowledge of, or prejudice against, the source whence it came.

A proposition was then made, by the same M. Deriot who had taken up the case of Pinatsi with such warmth in the explanation of his address, that Altowan should be seized and detained. At this juncture, when the council only seemed to wait a fitting force to execute the judgment they were ready to award, Joe Henry addressed Stay, demanding that Altowan should be confronted with his accuser before they should proceed to so open a violation of the rights of hospitality. The proposal was received with coldness, and no one seemed inclined to give it support, until the free spirit of Henry was roused at this pusillanimous injustice. "I was ready to somewhat lower down than that of Roallan; and Altowan, mounting his horse, after excusing himself from the hospitality offered by several of the others, followed through clustering huts the way he had described. He was met before he had proceeded far by Henry, who rode one of the horses of Roallan, and begged him to change with him that he might take the jaded animal, after dark, to a spot where he might be left out all night, to recruit himself after his severe journey. Numerous were the gay horsemen that paraded through the long encampment that evening, and the throng gathered thick around the stranger chief. Clad in a simple but well-fitted hunting coat of leather, a fillet of otter confining his dark hair, himself of lofty stature, and mounted on a horse over the usual height, he rose above the ordinary crowd with a natural air of command, receiving their eager greetings as one not unaccustomed to homage; and before he had retired to the tent, he had inspired a general feeling of admiration among the very men who, an hour before. might very easily have been led to consider him a criminal worthy of death. Soon after, Parfin might have been seen gliding from the neighborhood with his usual air.

The sound of mirth and wild music, the triumphant shout of drunkenness, the busy hum of that short carnival, where the labor of the adventurous hunter for the by-gone season, and even the hope of the one to come, are held amply recompensed by the wild extravagances that distinguish the days of jubilee from the season of danger and toil—succeeded. The bright fire every where marked the circulating bowl. Occasionally, through the murky gloom, unlit by any blaze, the dark figure of the lover seeks the promised meeting, or the jealous husband watches for the food of his own suspicions. Upon the bank, where the Susquadee glides noiselessly by its willow fringe, near the remaining traces of a fire which appeared of a date somewhat anterior to the present rendezvous, stood a man who held a powerful horse by the bridle. He had in his hand a rifle, with the accouterments of ammunition; and he had not remained long before he was joined by another person. Not many words passed between them, and one could not perceive that the latest comer uttered more than a low and indistinct response, when the other paused as if for reply. He could, however, mark the hanging head and dejected air of him who appeared to be the inferior, as he received the rifle and prepared to mount; but when he the lodge of Stay there was a knot of idlers, among whom there appeared to be some interesting subject of debate; and a huge fire under a neighboring bush, was loaded with kettles and surrounded by roasts. There was every sign of a feast being in preparation; and various utensils of various shapes, were carried forth in every direction from the fountain of alcohol which an adjoining tent concealed; but the attention of the group we have mentioned was attracted by the appearance of the stranger and his guide, whose course seemed to bear directly toward them, until he stopped, and after the slight salutation of a man whose mind is preoccupied, dismounted and approached the entrance of the lodge. The crowd that had gathered closer as he came in sight, gave way before him; and without question, he entered through the low aperture which alone gave access to the presence of him he sought. A slight murmur arose among those he had so unceremoniously passed; and the name of Altowan was muttered in answer to the low-toned inquiries that his sudden appearance and bearing had excited in those to whom he was unknown.

The news of Roallan's safety, if such a term could be applied to a captive in the Blackfoot camp, had arrived that morning by Pinatsi; and Stay was relieved by it from a state bordering on distraction. The demand for ransom was scarcely heeded, as regarded its amount; and he could hardly urge on with sufficient rapidity, the preparation for its departure. The other heads of parties and their retinue of clerks, were invited to a festival; liquor was distributed to the men, and the host awaited his guests in excited expectation, at the moment of this abrupt intrusion. The manner of Altowan's greeting could hardly be considered as the herald of a visit of simple courtesy, and Stay was almost startled out of his propriety; but he contrived to make his reception of the uninvited guest as polite as his surprise would permit. A few minutes served to explain that the messengers were unfaithful; and though they had come with true credentials, meant to appropriate to themselves the ransom demanded, leaving Roallan at the mercy of his captors. Altowan's object was alike to secure to the merchandise its proper destination, for which he stood pledged, and also to defeat the traitorous design he had detected. The embarrassment of poor Stay was now at its height. He had considered the invoice he had just made out as an agent too powerful for failure; and his mind had been relieved of its fears and cares, but to be thrown back upon worse than the original difficulties. At the suggestion of his informant, he went out to direct that no farther steps should be taken in the delivery of the goods until he should give farther orders.

In the mean time, the arrival of the far-famed Altowan had spread through the camp, and had reached the ears of Pinatsi amid the jovial pleasures of the bowl. It was impossible for him to return to the Blackfeet under the opprobrium of defeated villany; he could not remain in the camp of the whites, to suffer alike under the stigma of poverty and treachery; and his mind was made up in the courage of the cup, to face with a bold denial the accusation which the orders of Stay had prepared him to expect, and he came to meet it with a boldness that would have been more becoming in one more innocent.

Stay, having countermanded the delivery of the goods, was retracing his steps toward his lodge when Pinatsi met him, and in a manner natural enough, asked the reason of the delay. Perplexed already, Stay did not attempt to conceal the real reason, and informed him at once, as if relating to a person unconcerned, the whole account he had heard from Altowan. Pinatsi's look of surprise was not ill feigned on a countenance naturally ingenuous; he asked, "does a white captain believe the tale of a discarded Blackfoot leader against the writing of his own chief, who waits for rescue? I see many about your camp to whom my character is known; and whatever may be the result, I have a right to ask a fair trial." But he spoke to one who did not appear to listen; and they walked together to a lodge where the feast was to be held, to which the leaders of the camp had been too hastily invited, to rejoice in the anticipated liberation of Roallan. They entered, and found assembled the heads of the American companies, their principal free men, and a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had come from the Western depots of their extensive territory, to collect debts, and by the superior excellence and low price of his commodities, disparage those of rival traders, if not enter into open competition. The policy which generally governs this colossal mercantile power, showed itself in the selection of Mr. Norman, whose character was generally respected, and who was popular even among the men who were most ready to take any advantage of an opponent.

believe Pinatsi with the rest," he said, "until he touched a point on which I know enough to doubt; which of you dare lay hands on Altowan? Let him be brought here, and if he does not clear himself, I will be the first to volunteer my aid in his arrest." Still Deriot and others declared themselves satisfied, and the single voice of Henry was drowned in the clamor; many who had been partaking freely of the liquor that was profusely served out on the occasion, were at the door, and could by a word be excited to any act of violence. The remonstrances of Henry were unheeded; and the universal cry was for immediate judgment, to prevent the chance of escape, and an adjournment to dinner. Angry voices still rose in the debate, and the hum of many tongues was heard without, when, after a sudden rush, the din of the outer crowd was hushed as if by a spell. The change was not unperceived by those within the lodge. Pinatsi, who was seated next the door, looked out; the mass that obstructed his view was giving way, and he turned to the inquiring looks of the council a countenance so changed, so pale, that there were men there present who will remember it when years have rolled away. The covering of the entrance was thrown aside, and the cause of their discussion entered. There was for a moment a strange and painful pause, which was broken by an awkward attempt at courtesy, in offering a seat which was calmly declined. Pinatsi would have made his exit free from observation, but had been prevented by Henry; when Altowan turned to the crouching traitor at his feet and told him to begone, and he went without looking up, but with the alacrity of one reprieved from death.

Altowan then looked round the circle with that eye which told nothing, but read all; his peculiarly noble figure and commanding air, were the more striking from the position he occupied toward the circle around; but when his scrutiny, in its turn, fell upon Norman, a smile of recognition lit up his features. It was full of fascination, but it lasted only a moment. Norman rose from his seat, and advanced to receive the proffered hand, with an air in which affection seemed to struggle with profound respect. How he would have accosted him, or what he would have said—for he appeared eager to speak—was unknown, as a sign from Altowan checked him, while he addressed Mr. Stay. "I am not uninformed of your doubts; but I trust the presence of Roallan himself will ere long settle them to your satisfaction. These gentlemen, who were about to condemn me unheard, will show, I trust, equal facility in crediting the testimony of Mr. Norman, who can inform them that I have hitherto been considered worthy of belief; farther it matters not that you inquire." It was evident enough from the manner of the chief factor, that Altowan was a person of the highest consideration in his eyes; and the first to acknowledge the re-establishment of his character was Monsieur Deriot and those who a moment before, were loudest to condemn him.

The cry for "hump ribs" succeeded a horn of brandy, which passed around as a whet to the appetite; the middle of the circle was soon covered with white skins to serve as table cloths, while smoking dishes replaced each other in rapid succession. But the mysterious deference paid to Altowan from a person of such high character as Norman, threw a restraint over the whole party; and it was in vain that he sought to enter into general conversation, and explained the just jealousy of the tribe with whom he had lived, to preserve their country from the poverty and ruin that the whites had brought upon that of the Snakes; it was in vain that he explained, that breach of faith and murder, had been begun by the whites; and that though there were bands of thieves among all Indian nations, their proportion among the Blackfeet, was not in a greater ratio than among other tribes, according to their greater population—mentioning instances of similar depredations and crime from Snake parties, the people of all others in their own country, the most submissive and friendly. He described the part he and other chiefs took in restraining the wild bands which sallied forth beyond control to acquire booty and to avenge wrongs ; and above all, he requested Norman to remember that his company had identified themselves with all the enemies of the Blackfeet, and had furnished arms and trappers to invade their hunting grounds, contrary to the laws of the United States, in whose territories they lived ; and he finished by declaring that his departure from the Blackfoot tribe was final, and that he should probably demand the hospitality of the first company that descended Snake River, in order to proceed to the Western Ocean.

Altowan was listened to with attention, but without reply. The meal ended, the party broke up as the sunset was observed through a cloud of dust which numerous herds of horses congregating from every point, raised around. Norman took the way to his own camp, which was

was in his saddle, and had wheeled to plunge into the stream, he turned partially round, and the low tick, as if of the cocking of a gun-lock, struck his ear. He who had given the horse still stood gazing at the horseman, almost within touch, but moved not; it was but a momentary pause; the steed and his rider disappeared over the bank and entered the river, and the other turned silently away.

In the beginning of June, the following year, when the turf was green in the place where still might be marked that small, black spot, the almost obliterated trace of a former fire, lay the form of a youth, whose face, turned toward the earth, was concealed by his long auburn hair. He was in the dress of a hunter; his horse grazed quietly in that small mead, by the swift waters of the Susquadee; and when he raised himself up, the traces of tears, which no human eye had seen, bedewed his cheek as he murmured, "I knew not that it was unloaded, yet I stayed my hand." He plucked up the few plants of grass and weeds that had taken root in these dark ashes; and then proceeded toward the water, and took up a large stone, but let it drop before he had ascended the bank, looked round with a melancholy smile, mounted, and disappeared.

It was about the end of the last watch, when some one, whose pursuits had led him from the rest, or who was but then on his way to snatch a doubtful repose, heard a hail from the left bank of the river, where a small grove covers the narrow flat between the water and the overhanging bluff; but the faint moonlight could show no form whence came the voice. He answered however, and as there was a ford, invited the unknown to come ahead. It was not long before two persons on horseback might be discerned, breasting the current; and his curiosity led him to await their arrival upon the bank. The foremost, upon landing, paused a moment for his companion, who was a female, and thanking the man for the direction he had given, proceeded slowly on and was lost behind one of those fringes of willows whose curved lines here intersected the camping ground.

After the break of day, when the animals had been released from their pickets and nearly all of those who had risen to release them had returned to their warm beds, Altowan was awoke by Parfin, and with a joy long unknown to him, learned that Roallan and Idalie were safe returned—the latter to the habitation of her father. This familiar spirit, whose communications had the merit of being always short, and whose sole occupation it was to make them well-timed, showed no sign of wonder as he beheld Altowan stride rapidly toward the hut of Montalt. He there found he had not trusted in vain to the nature of Roallan's attachment, who had not dared even to propose that wrong which circumstances had placed in his power; but he grieved to find that the happiness of his sister was forever interwoven with the prospect of a union to which she could see no bar. The death of Watoe he heard in silence; and returned to the solitude of his tent, at the door of which, that whole day, Parfin sat, and refused all admittance. M. Deriot alone, in a state of half-intoxication, forced an entrance; but did not stay long. He was often fruitlessly questioned at the time, as to what befell him there; and even in those veins of boasting to which he was habitually addicted, it became common in after times, to silence him by asking how he had fared when he alone had ventured to intrude on the solitude of the unknown chief.

That day passed over, and on the next Altowan and Roallan had met. Their conference was long, but apparently unsatisfactory; though there was more cordiality in Altowan's manner than it usually exhibited. He stated however, that it was necessary they should no longer journey together, and that as Roallan had expressed his intention of returning by the Platte to the United States, he had made up his mind to take the route to the mouth of the Columbia with his sister, and go round the Continent; that if they should ever meet again—as he had no hesitation in saying he and his sister hoped they might—he trusted they might not again be obliged thus to part. The party of Norman was to leave rendezvous the morning after this conversation had taken place; but Altowan, instead of finding his sister ready to accompany him, was told she had had an altercation with her father, who refused his consent, and that Idalie begged to see him. A few moments brought him to where, bathed in tears, she had just parted from Montalt, who had positively interdicted her departure. He said he had but her left, and that no one should separate them; and the struggle in the mind of Idalie was sorely biased by the chance that she might be saved an immediate parting with Roallan by adhering to the decision of her father.

Montalt was purposely absent, and Altowan knew not where he might be found; but as the company were already moving, he set out to search for the profligate Canadian. There was a color unusual in his dark cheek, and a hurry in his gait, that he who had alone known him there, had never before seen. He accosted him as he strode along, without clew to his search or any clearly defined purpose; for it was evident that he could adduce no proof of his relationship then, or if any, none that could countervail the authority of a father. He knew that the popularity and the wealth of Roallan, were probably enlisted secretly against him; and as these thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, he unconsciously stopped when addressed by Parfin. An observer would have scarcely noticed in the quiet manner of this unaccountable being—whom no one loved, and the greater part shunned—any thing beyond a passing remark; but after it had reached the ear of Altowan, his step was steady and his mien collected. It was in a lodge where several freemen were collected, in an out-of-the-way part of the camp, that he found the object of his search. He was received with signs of confusion and surprise by its inmates; and Montalt, under the influence of considerable excitement, at once addressed him and declared that all applications were needless—that he intended to keep his daughter with him. He was joined by a chorus of voices to the same effect. Altowan allowed their courage to evaporate a little in words before remarking that it was an affair between Montalt and himself, and he meant it should remain so; and those present who had taken part in the question, having done so by the wish of the old man, were ready to throw back the burden of resisting the departure of his daughter on his own shoulders, as there was now apparently no farther reason for their interference.

In the mean time, there was an eye upon the father of Idalie, which, when it had once caught his, bound him as with a spell. Altowan approached to where he sat, and Montalt laid his hand upon his pistol, as if fearing personal violence. "You have nothing to dread, old man," he said; "I am well aware that you have been highly bribed to act the part you are now playing; but you shall not be a loser by delivering your daughter to my keeping. Thus far I speak you fair, and I have no object in making unnecessary disclosures unless you force me to it; but refuse her to me—nay, shake but your head in dissent, and by the living God, you shall go also." His voice was lowered to a whisper, so that some words which followed were only heard by that ear to which they were addressed; but the weather-beaten cheek of the old Canadian showed, that however softly uttered they had been, these few words had struck him to the life. He looked wildly on the dark and stern countenance before him, and it seemed as if the haggard traces of age visibly accumulated on his visage even while he gazed. The two arose and quitted the lodge; the fierce and intractable parent following with the weakness and submission of infancy, to deliver up his child.

There was something in the scene, that to the eyes of those who had witnessed it, went beyond the common course of nature; and they almost involuntarily shuddered at the thought of that mysterious power under which all opposition appeared to quail. What passed between the two was never known to those whom they had left; but they gazed after them in pity mingled with dread, and soon saw Idalie, assisted by her father, saddling for the departure that he appeared now eager to expedite.

The idlers and the curious, as well as the friends of those about to depart, were now gathering about the dismantled lodges of the "North West,"* when a Snake, actuated by a prospect of gain, or instigated by some one to try the powers of Altowan, brought up, led by a strong halter, a wild horse, whose power and beauty rendered him a prize well worthy of him who could subdue a spirit which breathed in every movement with untamable fire. He was coal black, with the red nostril, the high crest, and long mane of his race; he had been the leader of a hundred, who surrounded by a hunting party of Snakes, were forced into a quagmire, where he was secured and dragged out by his pursuers. Almost unheeding the men, he occasionally, with head erect and ears bent forward, bounded toward those of his own species who came within his reach; now prancing on with the lofty step of the *manège piaffe*, and now halting to gaze around on those prairies which he was wont to scour—the swift and free companion of the winds. No one had as yet, ventured even to caress the noble captive; and he stood stamping the ground and pawing up the dust with impatience. There was a general buzz of admiration in the crowd, as he gazed with seeming lofty indifference over their heads for his troop, now far away, and with it his lost dominion. The Indian

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* Formerly traders, though now merged into the Hudson's

Bay Company; but the whole is generally known in the mountains by that name.

asked Altowan if he would take the animal; he had heard from afar that he could conquer wild horses; his ears were now tired, but his eyes were open. "I am about leaving these hunting grounds to go a distant voyage upon the waters," he answered; "I have no need of horses but to bear me along until I descend the swift river in a canoe; let the Snakes keep him; your women will be glad when he goes out and meat is scarce in the camp. If the Snakes can not, I will ride him; but let them try first. I would leave him with you, that the eagle may be remembered among your people." There were many Indians present; and while some hung back, it is fair to suppose, to force the stranger chief to a trial, most dreaded the danger of what they knew must be a hopeless risk. Just as the silence of all seemed to refuse the challenge, a youth named Kervish, of a modest and firm deportment, younger brother to Bracelet-de-fer, stepped up and offered himself, not he said, that he thought he should succeed, but to show there were those among his people not afraid to try what any other man would dare.

The natural good feelings of Altowan were not all dead; and when he saw the brave youth, probably about to sacrifice himself, and certainly to sink in the estimation of his tribe under an unsuccessful attempt, he felt that it would not afford him any pleasure, or add to his triumph, to allow him to proceed. He had already stripped himself, as is customary among Indians when about to ride a race. He stopped him with a smile, telling the others that he was henceforth his brother. He now waved back the circle that had closed up, and remained standing alone with those who held the cord, near the chafing prisoner. Walking carefully round, and addressing the animal in an unknown tongue, he came to the point from which blew the breeze—the horse eyeing his movements with keen attention. After he had stood a moment directly to windward, he turned completely round toward him. Altowan now advanced and caressed him, muttered something in his ear, and passing his hand over his nose and lips, tied the cord—which he pulled from the hands of those who held it—in his mouth, and twisting his hand in the mane, vaulted on his back. The courage which had hitherto borne up against all else, seemed now to give way to surprise, and the back sunk and the ears moved in a sort of doubtful trepidation; but the bound that succeeded, was one, that to all appearance, would emancipate him forever from human control. The rider however, retained his seat; leap after leap succeeded, and then the flight of real fear. Men ran out to the height which commands a view of the prairie, and saw but the dust that marked their way. Some gazed with wonder, some with doubt, and others with fear. That which appeared medicine to the Indian seemed familiarity with the powers of darkness to the Canadian; and there were but few who beheld the small and distant cloud, that still lessened as it flew along the plane, who ever expected to see horse or rider again.

There were but two persons that saw them depart, who took any interest in the fate of that bold horseman. Henry and Idalie strained their eyes, and asked those on horseback if there was no sign of return; but the Kay* of the Snakes, was all the answer they received. At this juncture, Parfin having come up, and learning what had taken place, reassured Idalie with one of his peculiar smiles; but beckoning Henry, they moved rapidly away toward some of the already mounted followers of Norman, who joining them, proceeded down the river bank. There were altogether about a dozen; and it was, perhaps, well for Altowan that day, when the suspicions of Parfin led him to the precaution of following, as they had hardly descended the Susquadee to where Horse Creek joins its waters, when they perceived a party of armed Indians and half-breeds, pushing briskly to the point of the bluffs that here terminates the level ground.

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* Kay, Snake word, translated No.

In the mean time Roallan had found out Montalt, whom, it may be easily guessed, he had previously influenced to retain Idalie with the camp; and the old trapper had tried, since the interview just described, to avoid a meeting or explanation, involved as he was with both parties; but being at last caught, he was obliged to own that he had not the power to fulfill his promises, nor could he assign a reason for his assertion. The underhanded part Roallan had taken, of course, inclined him to avoid a rupture; but he still sought a meeting with Idalie. The most distracting feelings agitated him. At one time he determined to brave the anger and the pride of his father, and declare himself the suitor of the beautiful half-breed; but that course had been met at once by a promise, that should they find themselves together in a civilized country, there would be no bar to their union on the part of her brother; but that all intercourse till then must cease. There was no means of changing the aspect of affairs now, and he felt that he must bid them for the present, farewell. Strong in this determination, he turned toward the tent of Norman, now about to be pulled down; where, with the half-breed concubine of the chief trader, sat the object of his trouble and desires. On his entry with an anxious brow, Idalie, whose mind was full of her brother's risk, asked him eagerly if there were news of his return. "Have you, then, no thoughts for me, when we are about to be torn asunder, that you ask but for him with whom that long season is to be spent in which I am condemned to solitude and despair?" "I see and know that you are safe," she answered; "and were the case reversed, and were you borne off in that wild career, beset too, with enemies, for I well know this mad act will place him in peril from those Indians who both hate and fear—but, hark! did I not hear a shout?" They looked out on the moving mass that were occupied with all their various interests and amusements—the Hudson's Bay Company, with their animals already loaded, and that large train of women with which the affections of the clerks and *employees* are entangled until they become the willing slaves of the one in order to be subservient to the other. A horseman was nearing the camp with desperate speed, and the shout had been for the return of Altowan; but as the distance lessened, it appeared to be a half-breed —one of those whose motions had previously excited the suspicions of Parfin. He bore the intelligence that a party of Crows were in the neighborhood, and the whole multitude were rushing either to secure their property or to count a coup on the daring intruders. Squaws, children, chiefs and warriors, each with the anxiety of fear or the eagerness for fight, ran hither and thither; while the scattered horses, in their different bands, were being collected by the alarmed guards, and the whole plane was covered with one vast cloud of dust, a portion of the animals occasionally emerging to be again enveloped, and the war-whoop, in the mean time, sounding indiscriminately from every quarter of the camp, both from whites and Indians. The confusion was at its height, when from behind the thick bed of willows which covered the low ground in a considerable mass, about the center of the camp, appeared Altowan and his steed, no longer black, but streaked with dirt and blotched with white foam, panting and trembling, but subdued. Some of those who had been the first to obtain horses in the general rush, now galloped up to learn the news ; and it excited the mirth of the Americans to see their blank countenances when they were answered by a cold and almost contemptuous smile, as dismounting, he gave the rein of the conquered horse to the young Indian who alone had offered to break him.

The sun was getting high when the caravan took its departure to cross over the heights toward Bear River and the "Little Lake." Montalt was to accompany his daughter as far as Snake River. There was many a head turned back in fond regret among the gay ladies who flaunted in new scarlet and glittering gems, their horses prancing with their tinkling housings—the lynx-eyed paramour and suspicious husband alike on the watch that they should not stray far from the line of march. Idalie's was not the gayest heart in that varied throng ; but her graceful air and placid mien, told nothing of what passed within. Thus, by this movement, were many lovers parted ; and the rendezvous presented a scene somewhat damped in its gladness from the blank thus created. There was still however, enough of red beauty left, to employ the unoccupied thoughts of the dissipated whites ; and Roallan had already obtained the favor of the Rhee before mentioned, who had found a means of returning among the whites in preference to following her captors to the Blackfeet village; and from his prodigal liberality, had gained the palm among the purchasers of love at that great fair of female charms.

Some days had elapsed; the parting from Idalie he had braved with all the courage that pride and necessity could inspire; but it was vain to attempt to banish all thoughts of a form that lived in his heart. Dissipation of every sort, left but a sadder vacuum between the acts; and he felt it necessary to give way to unceasing debauchery, to defend himself from that terrible feeling of melancholy, which like jealousy, creates its own nourishment. Had there been difficulties in his new pursuits, they would have afforded an occupation and relief from dreams of bereavement; but there were none, and he had not yet acquired the art of creating the adventitious refinements which a palling appetite suggests. His tent was a harem; and when he left the soft skins and the scarlet drapery which shed a rosy glow over the luxurious revelry within, it was to seek in male companionship and the bowl, a stimulant to flagging spirits, and a change from satiated joys. In the song, the dance, sometimes in the foot-race, at the target, or wrestling ring, his performance brought forth shouts of applauding wonder; and the brimming cup, formed of the deep horn of the bull, was passed from lip to lip to crown the orgie. He sought in vain on his pillow, smoothed by soft hands and watched by rival blandishments, that deep and mysterious oblivion—undreaming sleep. Thus days passed away; but they were days of feverish excitement, and nights of dissoluteness and unrepose.

It was a bright morn; Roallan and Henry were on the banks of the clear stream, shaded by the poplars that hung over its banks—the frost glittering like early dew upon the mint and the short grass that grew fresh and green beneath the protecting undergrowth. An affection had sprung up between these two young men, nearly of an age, although the graver manners of Henry gave him the appearance of seniority, which had insensibly ripened into friendship; and they had sought that shady spot where both were in the habit of bathing—each with the hope of meeting the other. The conversation was not one of sentiment, yet in both a weariness of the useless life they led, was apparent; and the direction in which one would move to vary the scene, when he proposed to visit the meeting of the Pacific wave with the waters of the Columbia, showed the goal to which his wishes pointed. There had been a fabled story of the richness of that country, which, under the denomination of OREGON—a corruption probably, of the French word for *Hurricane*—enjoys, though a very rainy, a bland and temperate climate, but is totally without rich soil fitted for cultivation to any considerable extent. The desire to see it, was not difficult to account for in one such as Henry, of a family of rovers, who, if not driven forward from location to location by the distant view of a chimney smoke, were of that class in which the seeds of adventure require little to foster—little to quicken them into action. Thus the desire of the one met the reciprocating wishes of the other. "It is in vain I wish to go east; I can not descend that long Platte, and think I am every hour widening the space between us; I can not look even at the sun, or at the moon, at any given period, with the hope that her eyes are also fixed on it: at a different hour they rise and they set to her. We will follow them to the country of the fisherman, to the valley of the lofty pine; we shall leave the courser of the plains for the light canoe, and our song shall mark time to the paddles on the dark waters. They can not flee so fast but we may overtake them." Thus soliloquized Roallan, as he sat on the bank and forgot his purpose of bathing; while his companion, in whose mind the affair was already arranged, was enjoying the cool waters with the zest of a dolphin.

A letter to Stay, was all that explained the departure of the two young men and their guide, with Jasper the sailor boy, who had followed Roallan from the ship which had brought him to New York. Occasional absences for the purpose of hunting, had accustomed his followers to temporary disappearances; and the letter was not delivered till his prolonged absence, had created question of his safety. He had by that time, passed where Bear River enters the Little Lake, and having left its momentary repose, takes its course toward the Willow Valley. They had stopped at the soda spring, which, warm and effervescing, gushes from the rock by the grove of cedar and the white clay bluffs, near the commencement of the volcanic region. There is something desolate in the spot; and it is the haunt of two pelicans, whose flight, when disturbed by those whose fate takes them toward the west by this route, is seldom extended far away; and he who returns, finds them spreading their heavy wings over the same spot, and the glassy stream gliding under their dark shadows as before.

The mountains are here, covered with the argali, but they wanted no more than sufficient meat for their journey; their object was to gain time, and not to kill it, as is but too frequently the great object of many. The buffalo was slain and the meat preserved, as a necessary caution forbade indulgence in the pleasures of the chase, while the least delay was inimical to the object of their journey.

The horses were yet fresh, and the third day brought them in sight of the groves of poplar that mark the progress of Snake River through the plain that lay beneath their feet, just as the sun went down and warmed the distant tops of *the Three Butes*, which rise out of the arid prairie, where rivers of less magnitude are swallowed up in rents of the earthquake. It was one of those beauteous nights—for night it was to all but the gilded peaks, the landmarks of the wanderer; the river, down which their journey lay, runs clear and full to the ocean, after the first burst of thawing avalanches has sent down its muddy tributes; and along its banks no guide may be needed, nor apprehension of danger felt, in comparison with the regions they had left. The dark and uncertain line, midway between them and those three hills that rise isolated in that waste, mark the river that accompanies them to the end of their course. They had stopped near a small spring, back from the Blackfoot Bute; the day's travel had been long, and partly over broken rock or beds of lava; on the waters of the Portoneuf the last band of buffalo had been run, and the line that separates the free hunter of the mountains from the fisherman and the root digger, was passed; the last hump rib was cooked, and they sat by the fire and knew not their forlorn state. Hope, love, and curiosity, all led to delude them from the contemplation of the real penance they were about to undergo; and the economy of rations, the watchfulness against waste, the monotonous journeying of worn-out horses over dried-up herbage, and the excitement of hunting and of danger past—past, also, was the burning sun by day, the musquetoes by night.

CHAPTER III.

It was again spring; the ice had disappeared from the rivers, and an equivocal green was clothing the woods and the fields that hung over the Bay of New York; and the habits of the dwellers in that gay city, were in that state of migration produced by the sudden change from extreme cold to temperate and renovating May. The windows again were opening to the gentle breeze, and the fair forms within scarce shrunk from the kissing zephyr. The welcome of the returning flowers and leaves, and the reappearance of the beauties of nature, are not without rivals in these delicate forms, first throwing off the shrouding defenses against the rigors of cold. And then, the timid lover again, with tumultuous thrill, beholds the white, round arm at the half-concealing lattice, and scarcely dares search for a glance of the dark eye through the clustering tresses above. It was one of those evenings that follow the first warm days, and the windows of every house were open, while a crowd of idlers thronged the pavements that line Broadway, and branch off to either side round "The Battery," where the gentle breeze from the bay, untainted by the perfumes, and undisturbed by the noise of the busy way, refreshes the air under the shade of the alleys of elm and plane trees that adorn the place. Though neither imposing in size nor decoration, there is something in this garden—or "Battery," as it is called—that is strange and beautiful. Situated at the end of a narrow point of land, on which is built one of the most busy cities in the world, it is wonderful to find a perfectly quiet and an open beach in the neighborhood of such commercial strife.

There were, on this evening, two young men in the crowd, who seemed as if they lived more in themselves than in notice of, or likeness to, the surrounding throng. Their height was nearly similar, as was also their dress; a shade of dandyism might however, mark a difference in the one, while the other wore an air somewhat listless, if not melancholy, as they sauntered down the branch of the street that leads to the left at the foot of Broadway. Their conversation was not continuous, and neither seemed to be intent on keeping it up. "It is a blessing not to have to stop and talk—to have no acquaintances to derange one's mind. I could almost live and be content any where, if left alone." This was uttered by the youngest, who was also the freshest looking of the two youths we have just mentioned; and it was some moments before he was answered by his companion. "You should live in the woods, then." "You mistake," was the reply; "I am more solitary here; you are the property of every living thing you meet in the forest; the passer-by, has a right to question or require aid; the deer, and the squirrel, and the woodpecker, demand attention; and even the bee, excites a plundering desire to trace his flight to the hollow limb of his home. You have to note, too, the mossy side of the trees to know your bearing, when the clouds shadow the pathless woods. Nature claims too much there; you can not abandon yourself, if you would." "It appears to me," said his companion, "that the refinement of your education, has taught you an unnatural fastidiousness foreign to your nature —a morbid sensibility, creating its own food. Were I to be haunted as you are, with one feeling, I should not know how to draw (like the bee, from flowers in which we detect no sweet) bitters from all around to feed it." There was a gentle and acquiescent smile that played for a moment round the lips of the other. "You remember that old banker—how he begged us to his house this evening; I hear it is the best in the city. It is said, that when he makes an effort, every luxury gathers to his aid."

The conversation was here interrupted by a passing recognition, and the young men had sat down on one of those stone seats that are placed along the margin of the bay. The gardens were beginning to fill, as the hours of toil in search of gain were yielding to the approach of night. "You remember, Henry, we were told expressly by old Butler, that there was to be no crowd, and we are both pledged to go. This kind of life is new to you, and I see not why my moodiness should exclude you." "Nay, Roallan, I cared not to stay away, but to bear you company; therefore, we will go." "Now for something else. There is no use *fixing* the matter now, as you say true, though I had intended to have you think I went but on your account; but let it be," added his companion. The sea-breeze was freshening, and a sensation of cold soon put the sitters into exercise. They had not advanced far, when the figure of a man in spectacles hurriedly passed them. "There again!" said Roallan; "it is strange that I should be tormented by this phantom. Were you never haunted, Henry?" The other looked as if surprised at the question, while his companion continued, "Nay, look not incredulous; it almost appears as wonderful to me that you should not have had the same delusion, if you will so call it; but ever since I remember, there has been some one, who, in all climes and situations, assuming various shapes, has appeared to me as if familiar with my fate; and I have never even struggled against the belief, it has come so naturally upon me. You remember Perahoe? It appeared to me, that he was the same who haunted my steps on the Bay of Naples, in the Villa Reali, and crossed me in my evening rambles on the canals of Venice. I found such a figure on my return, in the streets of London; and most surprising of all, in my father's house there was such a being appeared once, sent there on business. He came with open, staring eyes, and my mother sent to know who he could be, and was astonished at the commonplace answer she received, and almost laughed me out of the belief."

They proceeded up Broadway, and entered one of those hotels opposite the Park, where they had apartments, and before long, were on their way to the house of Mr. Butler, which was situated in one of the streets intersecting the upper end of Broadway. It was a mansion of considerable size, where no expense had been spared in decoration. The two young men entered quietly, and were ushered up stairs by two or three respectable-looking servants, and almost met at the door of the first apartment by their host. There was a frank expression of pleasure in the countenance of the old man, who, after a slight scuffle with Roallan, possessed himself of his hat, and they entered the suite of rooms, which was moderately filled with company. There is little difficulty in the reception of a stranger in the United States, notwithstanding the shameful advantage that has been taken of the open hospitality uniformly extended to travelers.

There were two large rooms; and from the corner of the second, there ran a suite of three smaller ones, by some feet less aspiring in their dimensions, and occupying that portion which, in all American town houses, is attached, like a rider, to the rear of the main building. Into the first of these apartments, Roallan and his companion were ushered. A young lady, hardly a beauty, and scarcely an invalid, received them with perfect ease, to whom they were presented as the mistress of the house by the emphasis laid on the word "niece," and their being then abandoned by the uncle. To a total stranger, the scene of these apartments, must have been both new and amusing; as there were there assembled representatives from all parts of the world—from the wily Greek to the simple and single-minded backwoodsman. As Roallan threaded his way through the throng, apologizing for pushing past one, who acknowledged the courtesy, and to another, whom the apology seemed to astonish, he was met by the host, who inquired again after his health, in a manner which showed less variety of address than interest in the question. "Well," he said, "and how does my cousin here," pointing to Henry, "like the city?" but without waiting for a reply, was again immersed in conversation with some knot of persons on the prevailing politics of the day. Unacquainted, the two friends were at liberty to make their way about without interruption, and at last found themselves in the inner room of the smaller suite before mentioned. There was there a small phalanx, who surrounded a piano, where, ever amid the din of words, sweet sounds of harmony arose. To penetrate the throng was impossible; to behold the singer, equally so; but it was strange to hear those notes so purely Italian; so sweet, though subdued. The song ended; and though there appeared to be some struggle to have another, the movement about the instrument, showed the effort was without effect. Another strain succeeded; but though well performed, the English lay was unheeded by Roallan. His eyes wandered among the throng to discover the singer whom first he heard; but words understood and an air recognized, have charms to some beyond the intrinsic merit of the music or the performance; and the popularity of this attracted more than the other, destroying all chance of recognizing whence proceeded the first in the rush to hear the second.

The sounds so pleasing to Roallan had died away, and he was still dreaming of them and of other climes, when awakened by the applause of all around to the sense of where he was; but the murmuring hum of admiration for Robin Adair, was still unaccountable to him, and the tones of the Adriatic were yet vibrating in his ear. There are times when we mechanically go through scenes where the mind is absent; and the spirit of Roallan was again far away in the wilds by the rushing torrents of the Mountains of the Wind, in the deep still dell beside the dark blue lake—Eolian music in the upper air, and the lulling hum of the distant cataract beneath. Thus dreaming, the time was flowing apace; and Henry, who had been amusing himself, turned suddenly from one with whom he had been in conversation. Though the number of persons in the rooms was diminishing, yet there were still many present; and the view which Henry attempted to obtain of a figure which arrested his attention, was in a moment intercepted. Touching his acquaintance on the arm, he begged him to follow, as he wished him to find out who an extraordinary personage was, who had just disappeared. Their search however, was vain; and Roallan was roused from his revery by the return of his friend.

They were soon again in the solitude of the moon-lit street. "It is altogether curious that you should have seen him, and that your relation should not know him; though you, perhaps, failed in the description," observed Roallan to his companion. They had sent away their carriage, and were slowly walking down the long street that conducted them to their hotel; already half their way home was passed, when the appearance of the trees in a square to the right, down a cross street, attracted them, and they both obeyed a silent impulse in wandering to it. The cool, clear, and quiet night; the closed houses, and deserted square, were more suited to their mood than the unromantic comforts of a hotel. Each occupied by his own thoughts, they had silently traversed the end of the square to make its circuit, when a carriage was driven rapidly past them, and pulled up at a door not many paces beyond. The bell sounded, the steps were let down, and a man, enveloped in a cloak, the high cape of which concealed his features, descended and turned to hand out a female. Roallan was very near as the moon shone on a face whose features were never to be forgotten; but pale and fair, it could not be Idalie! His intention could not be to stop her, yet he stretched out his hands as if to take her from her companion; but he recovered from the momentary impulse as she passed and mounted the stairs of the house with her conductor—the door was closed, and the carriage disappeared. They proceeded onward in their walk some way, before Roallan had courage to examine if his agitation had been remarked by his companion; but when he looked on the cheerful air of Henry, it encouraged him to conceal, if not master, his feelings. They arrived at their hotel, and each retired; a door which communicated between their apartments was, contrary to custom, closed; and then it was, that the flood of recollection came thick upon him, and the strange doubts of the Italian air, the familiar voice he had heard, and the fair features of her whose memory mingled with all his thoughts! Yet it could not be; but the end of his conjectures was summed up in one resolve, that see Idalie he must; but where was she whose image had been so vividly awakened to his memory? and who was she who had so aroused it? His vigil was prolonged until the dawn, whose doubtful gray broke the lattice, when his taper had been extinguished.

The late toilet was completed, the sun shone, and the world was in motion. Wall-street had been already long the arena of business, and the Post had arrived with electioneering news; and, with all their odious sameness of language, victories were claimed, defeat unknown. Mingled, however, in the bustle of politics, were the eager countenances of commercial gamblers; and private joys, as well as sorrows, alternately lighted and shaded the physiognomy of the actors in that busy scene. The Exchange contained the telegraphic intelligence of such vessels as were known to be in the offing, entered as the news arrived; and in this register, those who sought information on such matters, here by a glance, could obtain it.

There was in the throng that pressed round this book, a man rather above the middle stature, of sallow complexion and dark eyes, yet with hair of a light brown, worn long; his dress was neat, but perfectly plain, and he might have been passed unnoticed in the crowd, were it not for a furtive expression of restlessness in the eye, which however, was partly veiled by a pair of green spectacles. Altogether he was a person of remarkable appearance, when once the attention was called to him. Having made his way to the book, he glanced a moment at the page, and abruptly turned away; but in so doing, met a youth whose object seemed to be the same. He stopped, a short communication passed between them, and they left the place by different doors.

Meanwhile Roallan, in a mood of impatience which his new-formed resolution produced, was eagerly pursuing his way to the mansion of Mr. Butler. He had made up his mind to sacrifice all other considerations to the engrossing passion which he felt it impossible to resist; and as he went along, he mused upon the strange power the beauty of Idalie had over him, and the vague manner in which it had been, on the previous night, rekindled. He had but once touched upon this subject with Henry, stating the disparity of birth as the cause that rendered a union almost impossible. The simple answer of the backwoodsman, made a strong impression on him. After hearing of the long line of illustrious ancestry, and the lofty position which his family had for ages maintained, he asked, then, was not all this sufficient? had he not, then, stock enough of nobility for both? Wavering as to the avowal, though resolved to throw aside all considerations that could hinder his desires, he had determined to inquire who it had been that had attracted his attention so forcibly by the Italian air. The sympathy which caused him to make this inquiry—as if he would thereby be really near to the discovery of a dearer object—was to himself quite unaccountable as he hurried into the presence of the old gentleman, who was seated in one of the lower apartments of his house, where he still loved the pursuit of that gain which was so liberally spent in the saloons above.

There was a moment's pause, when Mr. Butler, turning toward a young man who sat in the window with a strong light behind, which threw his features into a shade, "You ought to be known to each other, for you are countrymen. Lord Roallan, Mr. Mirvid." The good man looked to see this announcement take effect, not a little surprised at the cool manner of two loving Englishmen. At last Mirvid rose, and advancing, observed, in a manner completely frank, and a countenance lighted into intelligence, "We were a short time together at Eaton; is it not so?" The young men now shook hands, though languidly; and Roallan would have allowed the memory of the scene to fade, but that his new-found acquaintance, who seemed of another genus, took upon himself at once the management of affairs. "I was telling Mr. Butler how much trouble I had about my guns. I have half a dozen. I am always very particular about my things, and they are as bright"—he looked for a moment toward his boots—"as if new; and, indeed, the custom-house people thought they were, and seemed to think I came to peddle. I sent to remonstrate to the head man, and offered to swear, which I do not like to do often; but he let me off with a civil message, delivered through somebody's nose." Roallan smiled. There was something innocent in the way Mirvid uttered his half complaint, and a degree of quaintness in his manner that sounded fresh to his ear. The other proceeded, "You have been among the Indians, I hear, over the great mountains. I think of going. Begin to hunt at St. Louis? No tents; rough it, I suppose? My breed of pointers broke to stand any thing. At Astor House, eh?" and he twirled his hat by the ribbon as he made his exit amid the civilities of the old gentleman, who, if the truth were known, would have been glad that Roallan had gone too; but supposing that some business had thrown a thoughtful shade on his features, he sat down, motioning his guest to do the same, with the air of a man who would be glad to hear at once all you have got to say.

It was not easy to bring out the question which was the cause of the visit, without showing that it was so; and Roallan had to take a tour through the city before he caught what he thought a natural opportunity of making his simple inquiry. Who was, then, the lady he had met the evening before? But Mr. Butler could not pretend to know a superlatively beautiful beauty, as described by one who forgot that sixty sees not with the eyes of twenty, and, above all, that his description was none of the most distinct. There was no reason farther to prolong the visit; and Roallan musinglv, took his leave.

At dinner he and Henry were joined by Mirvid; who, finding his countryman preoccupied, bestowed himself entirely upon his friend, with a fluency and variety which could not fail to be amusing to the mind of one entirely without a feeling of prejudice or envy, and who, perhaps, did not perceive in the well-bred ease of the Englishman, a slight air of patronage and superiority, which, however, his own self-knowledge would have deprived of any power to wound his feelings. It was toward evening, and Roallan, leaving his companions, had sauntered out, and taken his way down Greenwich-street, which runs toward the Battery gardens, and also the principal place of steam-boat embarkation on the North River. It is a retired and quiet street, though at the end it leads to one of the most busy spots in the world—where more people are moving from boats and to boats, and more strange figures, each intent on his own pursuits, elbowing their way, followed by porters with baggage, or carrying under a cloak their light stock of clothes; the millionaire undistinguished from the pennyless adventurer, the broken merchant, or the mechanic who arrives at a venture, with five dollars in his pocket, to lay the foundation of fame and fortune. Emerging from Greenwich-street, and turning to the right, toward the water, where the wharves are at the garden gate, within which lie the boats of men-of-war, or the light craft that ply about under the name of wherries. The crowd from along the shore of the North River, press on here to pass through the garden; and those from the garden congregate here, to meet friends and to watch the ingress and egress of strangers; where, also, the usual loungers of the place have their stand when they leave the shade of the green trees to meet some person they wish to see, or to watch the movements of others.

It was to this spot that Roallan mechanically directed his steps; the departure of a New Jersey steamer, and the arrival of some North River boats, occasioned an unusual bustle; and he had some difficulty in pressing through the throng to get into the inclosure: there he stood leaning over the rail, and gazing on the waves at his feet covered by light craft, and the bay beyond, its anchorage studded with men of war, and those packet ships which are unequalled in beauty of appearance and luxury, and the boats that continually pass and repass with visitors or passengers to each.

There was a Havre packet which was anchored not far off, with the blue Peter at her main, the sails loosened, and the anchor short. The wind was fair, and the steamer that was to hurry her through the Narrows, was puffing forth her redundant steam from the custom-house wharf on the eastern point of the garden. Roallan, springing over the parapet wall, entered one of the ready boats dancing on the gentle swell beneath. One of the men who rowed asked, "To the Havre packet?" a nod in affirmative was sufficient reply, and he threw himself listlessly back in the stern. When they neared the noble ship, he took the tiller ropes in his hand and steered round the vessel, just as her steamer came alongside with her passengers and was making fast to carry her out; there was the usual crowd on her deck, and many friends accompanied those that were about to sail for the other continent.

The anchor was now heaved upon by the powerful capstan, and the merry song, the "Cheerily oh!" of the sailor, rose over the sound of the clanking chain, and the vessel was free to obey the impulse of her smoky mate. It was just at this moment, that the eye of Roallan, which was fixed unmeaningly on the poop, where the greater portion of the passengers were assembled, fell on two forms that in an instant caused a feeling almost of faintness to come over him as he sat, unable to collect his thoughts, while the steamer was gathering way and his boat was gradually dropping astern; it was with a cry of agony that he recovered himself from his first stupor and urged his rowers to overtake the packet ship; but they soon showed him that their best efforts were vain.

It was now impossible to do any thing but return, and try if there was any of the numerous steamers that might be induced to take a passenger after the vessel; and even this resource was suggested by the boatmen, Roallan himself scarcely having presence of mind to direct them where to land. "To the Whitehall stairs, then; I see several boats there," he cried, beginning at last to comprehend that he looked very foolish and was doing nothing. Thither they shaped their course. The two men, believing their freight to be the creditor to a large amount of some person he had discovered leaving the country, exerted themselves to put him in the way of recovering what appeared to give him such deep anxiety; and he was speedily landed.

It was now that he found leisure to reflect on the event which had so affected him. The strange appearance of that being whom he had seen on the Battery, and who had seemed at various periods of his life, in different guises, to have some connection with his fate; the green spectacles, the hair tied behind, and the slovenly apparel, were too remarkable to have been mistaken; but the strangest part of the matter, was the figure of a female closely veiled, on whom he appeared to be in attendance. It was this person in whom Roallan traced that unaccountable identity with Idalie. The figure was not to be mistaken; it was the same he had seen in the square two nights before, and which seemed now to fly from his grasp to distant lands, and which was also, he felt certain, the same with her who had awaked in his memory the almost forgotten airs of his childhood. To be in the same packet with her, and to have such an opportunity of resolving this mysterious connection of character, had been his first natural impulse, and this desire was confirmed by the short consideration he had time to bestow; a few inquiries at the custom-house, directed him to a neighboring wharf, where there was a steamer ready to take a pleasure trip to Staten Island, which, he was informed, might be easily hired to follow the packet in case she was detained at the Hook.

To the captain of this boat, he therefore, addressed himself. These persons are men of much higher class than the commanders of similar craft in Europe; and are remarkable as much for steering clear of a gossiping inattention to their business as that morose shortness of manner which characterizes the commander of the British boat. Pestered with a thousand different idle and foolish questions, they have a good-natured answer ready even when most occupied; and it seems as if the current of their thoughts on the management of their vessel, is never interrupted, while they afford satisfactory replies by rote to their numerous interrogators.

The captain, scrutinizing Roallan for a moment as he was making his proposal, answered, that unless there was some detention at the Hook, or a change of wind, there was no chance of overtaking the packet, as he could not be ready, even if they agreed on the terms, before twenty minutes, as his head engineer was ashore, and he had some preparations to make, which would consume the time he mentioned.

The retreating vessel was now almost in the Narrows, and the steamer scarcely preparing to unmoor. It was enough to try the patience of a more phlegmatic temperament than that of Roallan; but the captain spoke so fairly, and there appeared so much reasonableness in his manner, that it was impossible to avoid yielding to his experience or advice. Again then, was Roallan thwarted, and again broad seas were to be put between him and the object of his pursuit; were it Idalie, or were it her spirit—the phantom likeness was lost to him for the present, like the original. The breeze had freshened from the west; and probably the ship that bore her, had her canvas already filled, and was in her course across the wide ocean.

Yes, it was indeed too late to pursue; once more he was doomed, at a distance, to follow: four days more, and the Great Western was to leave New York for England; he might yet be at Havre before the packet. Thus mused Roallan, as he threw himself on a bench under the elms of the garden. It was about mid-day, and the heat of the sun was already oppressive, but the breeze was cool under the trees, whose foliage thus early afforded a grateful shade; and the gentle murmur of the waves that broke on the sea-wall refreshed the ear in absence of the fountains that adorn that beauteous Italy, the country of his youth—of which he mused half dreamingly, peopling its terraces with the forms he loved, and listening to that music of its language and its song.

There were not many persons in the garden, and but one who approached along the broad walk, at the side of which sat the disconsolate Roallan. It was one of the agents of the police, who had been employed by him to get him intelligence of the movements of the mysterious person who seemed to haunt his path, and the lady who appeared to have gone off under his care. The voice of this man recalled Roallan to his recollection; and he started from his reclining posture in expectation of that news which the address of the other led him to anticipate. "You have been to see the packet, sir," he said; "two of the persons of whom you inquire are on board, but they do not sail with her; they return with the steamer. There was an English yacht that arrived yesterday and wanted some repairs, and was sent round to Baltimore to get some spare yards, and I hear, goes thence to Europe: the persons, I believe, you mean, go there to embark; and if you like, I shall keep on their trail; but it would be as well for you to be there, if you want to have any communication with them."

"Keep an eye upon them, and I will see you at Barnum's the day after to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

"HERE we are at Baltimore," said Roallan to his friend, as they passed down one of its busy streets. "I have always heard it mentioned as one of the pleasantest cities in the country; but I think it must be pleasant indeed, and hospitable to strangers, if we find it so, as I do not know one living soul in the place, nor, I believe, do you." "Not one," said Henry; "but we are going away from the finest part of the town." "Yes, but we are going to that portion of it which makes the rest—where the wharves, and the great ware-houses, and the industry of the country are to be seen—which laughs at bankruptcy and specie payments."

They were approaching that singular wharf where the schooners lie—a complete navy of the most beautiful models in the world—and there is, perhaps, no class of vessels on the sea, that are so excellent of their kind as these. They were some time lounging along the quay, apparently without object or interest, until they stopped opposite the "Gribe;" and Roallan went aboard and asked for the master. A well-dressed sailor answered for him, and Roallan proceeded to inquire when the Atlanta would sail. The schooner captain hesitated; he thought he should know the vessel; had heard her announced, but could not recollect; did the stranger know what she was? or could he give a fuller description?

"She is a yacht, I understand, and puts in for the repair of some rigging and spars." "Ah! I know what you mean now. She will be ready in two days; her water is getting aboard; have you seen her?" "No," answered Roallan. "Have you heard of your brother to-day?" "Yes; he is about after some varmint, that I believe, are going in that very ship. He is to be here at seven o'clock, if you want to see him." "It is not necessary that I should wait; I can meet you at the Half-moon Tavern, Fell Point, at any hour you may name." "At nine o'clock, then," replied the seaman, and they parted.

The dinner at the hotel was good enough to satisfy the wants of Roallan and Henry, and even passed without absolute censure from Mirvid, who was more inclined to be a critic. "I have been reading a good deal about slavery, and I do not know how they are to do without it, from what I heard the other day from some Southern men," began Mirvid, who had stretched out his legs and filled his glass, as he cracked some hickory-nuts after dinner. "They look very squalid, these Southerners, and they say cotton and sugar must be abandoned if they can not have slave labor. We emancipators do not care for that; it is so glorious to be able to dictate to nations on this subject."

Roallan laughed; but occupied by his own thoughts, did not care to join in a discussion, and pointing to Henry, said, "Here is a Western man, who can answer better than I can on this subject." "Nay," said Mirvid, "from him I shall get no answer, as we are both, probably, on the same side." "There is little to say about it," said Henry; "but if you will get me the means of hiring work, I will give up my slaves; but it is somewhat hard to have the means of cultivating the soil taken away, no value given, and no means left of working our lands. I should like to know how much these abolitionists would give out of their own pockets toward the sacred cause of humanity!" "I greatly fear we shall cause as much unhappiness, under another name, by our interference, as there exists at present," answered Mirvid; however, Roallan was full of the abstract principles held by so many on the subject of slavery, and contended for its total abolition. "I think," observed Mirvid, "all cruelty seems to be estimated by its bulk; all the horrors of flogging and starving are counted as nothing upon small fry, at school; and no Wilberforce can found his fame upon putting down a Squeers." "I rather think that is overdrawn," said Roallan. "Well then, put schools aside, and we will take families; there is more cruelty practiced by parents, even toward their own offspring, than all the negro miseries that can be numbered." "You complain of my being an abolitionist on abstract principles," rejoined Roallan, who, though too well bred to argue, was amused by the discussion. "I think you are founding your propositions upon grounds that appear to me to be so untenable that they must give you some trouble." "How," said Mirvid, "do you think I flinch from my opinions because they are not those of the crowd, whose numbers constitute their safety?" "Nay, nay," interrupted Roallan; "let us have something for another time; at least leave *me* something, especially as I have a particular affair to attend to, and the hour appointed is almost passed, or will be so before I can be at the place of meeting."

He was putting on his cloak and hat as he spoke; and without attending to the jokes or remonstrances of the others, left the apartment.

It was in one of the cross streets that intersect those that run parallel with the water, in that portion of the city of Baltimore which is called Fell's Point, that a man was walking, somewhat impatiently, before a public house. His dress was that of one who, whatever he is or has been, in choosing it neither showed much taste nor betrayed any character. The hat—to begin at the top—was of the extremest narrowness of brim, which gave an appearance of thickness and length to his hair, which would not have been so apparent but for that fashion of castor, which seemed to sit on the top of an ill-dressed hay-cock. The coat, black and reverend, had the disadvantage of being too high in the collar and too short in the sleeves; which faults, however amiable singly, go not well together; and it might be farther inferred that the whole equipment would not have been consistent with the wearer's notions of the eternal fitness of things, had not the pantaloons been much too long, so as to leave the covering of the feet in mystery, save that the toes were turned up, in a way to correspond with the narrow brim, which turned down. Any one, without the aid of phrenology,[*] who had been set to guess what he was from his appearance, might have doubted between an actor and an itinerant parson. In fact, he had been both, and was ready for any other profession which the exigencies of the times required.

This person seemed to move about with an anxious manner. The street was dimly lighted, and scarcely any one was in it; at the end near the western corner of the block, which is nearest the open country, was a carriage; one or two people had passed, but an unusual quiet seemed to pervade Fell's Point, sometimes so busy; at last he stopped, and listened to the approach of a quicker step than that of the sailors who had rolled along before, and presently he could perceive, by the air and bearing of the person who had neared him through the gloom, that it was he who was expected. There were few words, and the last comer followed the other toward the carriage, and directed it to a part of the suburbs which he named. They entered, and passed through various by-streets; during which Roallan—for it was he—was informed by his companion, who was the agent employed by him at New York, and who had given him the information he received at the Battery garden, that the place pointed out for the embarkation of the strange lady was not far distant from the house where she now was, and that it was probable the ship in which she should go to Europe, would sail that night or early the next morning.

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[*] As an evidence of the power of phrenology, a celebrated American actor told the author that he had had his head examined by a phrenologist, who told him he was a preacher; and, in fact, he had been playing the part of Mawworm for several previous nights.

The intelligence, it may be believed, did not a little interest Roallan, as it appeared there was but the chance of that night's expedition to ascertain if his hopes were well founded, or if he was still to be carried on in the extraordinary illusion by which he had lately been possessed, and which, at the same time, he was so willing to follow. His companion looked out often at the window, and gave directions to the driver. At last they stopped at an open place, which appeared like a common, as there were no fences on either side the road; and, though urged to proceed, the coachman here refused to go farther in the direction pointed out.

The moon was riding dimly through the clouds, and a slight rain fell, so that the dangers of the road could not be seen; and they alighted in the dark, on that waste where the industry of man was about to erect a continuation of a city or its suburbs. Lines had been drawn, and levels dug out, by which, in daylight, the vast conception of broad streets and spacious squares could be traced; and though hell is said to be paved with good intentions, here the good intentions were evident, but had totally failed as a pavement. The narrow-brimmed hat led the way over a muddy and uneven space, and his companion patiently followed. Where the way is unknown, and in the dark, it always appears long; and as Roallan got impatient, when he came upon some stunted bushes, he asked his conductor where they were, and how much farther they would have to go. The man answered, it would be somewhat difficult to say by what mighty names the waste over which they had trod was to be known; "but you will soon," he added, "be in what is called Horse Heaven."

Roallan was now alongside his guide, and stopped him with an expression of doubt; thinking that it was scarcely the moment for a jest, and not being in the humor for any thing like trifling, he asked what he meant by such a name, and begged to have a serious answer to his question. "Why, look ye, sir! I am always serious when I talk of heaven; the place I named is so called as being where dead horses go to," answered the man, with that imperturbable manner which is peculiar to a Yankee. "But the house?" rejoined Roallan. "It is just beyond; a quarter will bring you to it. I promised to take you there, and if you follow me, I will," answered the other; and turning round, a momentary moon-beam showed his pale countenance, upon which, as nothing had been written, nothing could be read: and he added, "Look ye! you may think me slow, but I have a considerable of lightning about me, and you could never be able to keep up with me if I did not wear a silk shirt as a non-conductor;" and, notwithstanding the reverend color of his garments, there was about him still more an odour of tobacco than of sanctity.

They resumed their way, and again came upon a straggling effort at a street; and having gone along a half-formed pavement for some time, turned to the left, and again came out upon some waste land, where a few trees, apparently planted in some regular order, showed that there had been or still was a mansion. A nearer approach discovered a moderate-sized villa, with a piazza in front and a grove, whose opening foliage already formed a shade; a light appeared at a small window at the end of the house, beyond the extent of the veranda, and Roallan bounded toward it with the speed of one who loves and sees the cage of his adored ready to be opened by his hand; but with the light footfall of one who had been practiced in those wilds, where it is as much a science to conceal the sound and the trace of the foot, as it is in the civilized world to govern the tongue and often to obliterate its records.

There is sometimes an extraordinary attraction which assures us of the proximity of one loved, and with an internal faith, impels us to the presence of the object; through a half-closed blind a light streamed, and certain tones fell on the ear of Roallan, but they were those of a man; he was determined however, to make sure that she was not thus to be seen, where most a lover wishes to behold his mistress, at the casement of a window in spring, where all Nature is full of love, the oriel and the mocking bird have their notes, and the young perfume of the vine fills the evening air, as its breath comes from the forest. He had reached the window, which was not closed, and hesitated not a moment to look in. The apartment was a small oratory or chapel, and at an altar in a recess was a priest, who sung mass in a low, but melodious tone, and behind him kneeled a form that robbed the beautiful music of the vespers of its charms; and were it not in the dread of interrupting her, no consideration else, had stayed Roallan from entering at once to demand to be united in that sacred place.

That hesitation cost him many a long year of anguish; there was a barking of a dog at the other end of the building and a slight noise, which induced Roallan to take shelter in the little grove; and there he thought he could perceive the figure of his conductor beckoning to him, and the voices of two or three persons approaching from the house. Having once begun the retreat, he thought it better to allow perfect quiet to be restored before he ventured again near; and accordingly, kept going backward until he found a small thicket which might serve as a concealment. It consisted of two or three oak bushes, on which the dead leaves still lingered; they were however, quite thick enough and sufficiently high to hide any one in a recumbent posture; so he crouched down in such a position as to be quite concealed, unless expressly sought after. The noise at first noticed had ceased, but a slight rustling in the dead leaves made him at once spring from the shelter where he had lain; but in doing so, and in the act of rising, he was borne to the earth by the weight of two or three men, who threw themselves upon him. Resisting in vain, with that strength for which he was remarkable, but without crying out, which might have saved him, he was at last gagged and bound; and in half an hour the waste around bore no trace of his forcible detention, and a perfect silence succeeded to the previous struggle.

CHAPTER IV.

"I WONDER your friend Roallan does not make his appearance," said Mirvid to Henry, as they sat together after returning from the play. "I should wish to tell him of that pretty woman who seemed the victim of her husband's jealousy and ill temper. Did you not observe that she was obliged to leave the theater to appease him, because she had talked with apparent pleasure to two or three gay-looking young men? To be sure, she did not show all the taste of a woman that understands her business." "What business do you suppose she follows?" interrupted Henry. "I assure you I met her in the best society the other night at New York, and I think you are quite mistaken." "Oh! I only mean," rejoined Mirvid, "the business of living in the world; I must tell Roallan that the first slavery that ought to be abolished, is that of English and American wives, indeed, women at large, to the male sex. A man is thought the better of for a few gallantries; but the first trip condemns a woman, and puts her beyond the pale of good society. Let them begin at home and emancipate their wives, and then .go to Turkey, and there turn their strength to the negroes." "I suppose every thing is for the best," answered Henry; "and if we can not do without slaves, we ought to have them; but what is to be done with the saints?" "I do not know about that; but what a row they made about that Doctor Magendie for trying cruel experiments on animals that might tend for the use of man, while Mrs. Hannah More is permitted to kill fleas for her own convenience; every thing goes by magnitude." "Why," answered Henry, laughing, "it would show more cruelty to crush an elephant by steam power, than simply to kill a flea; but I really must go out to look after your countryman. We have scarcely been separated a night since I have known him, unless it was when he started on his own hook to hunt a runaway sweetheart in the Rocky Mountains; and then, though by good luck he fell in with some Nez-pierces, he narrowly escaped with his scalp, for he would not let them fight a party of Blackfeet they met, and they were all taken to the village of the Blood Indians, where they were saved by the great half-breed chief who arrived before and claimed the girl, whom he had brought with him to the camp, as his sister by the mother. They got away, and had nearly a fight about her at rendezvous; but Altowan, her brother, there again carried every thing before him, scared the traders and captains, and carried her off down the Columbia River; I thought it would have driven Roallan distracted, but he took it coolly at first; and then, when he did start after them, being too late, went no farther than the buffalo are found on Snake River, which is not very far. He then returned and overtook the party going down from the mountains to St. Louis with the furs; and here we are, after loitering about in various parts of the States."

Henry ended by repeating his uneasiness at the prolonged absence of his friend, thinking that it was not farther necessary to explain what his belief was as to the cause, with one to whom he had so slight an acquaintance as Mirvid. But the hours ran on, and no Roallan appeared. It had struck one, and Henry was full of vague apprehensions; he went out and walked in the silent street. He went to the corner of the principal thoroughfare and listened, in the hope of hearing even the sound of a conflict or a cry for help, any thing but that dreary silence. Those who have watched will know what is that patient suspense, which, though appearing to be of interminable length, is made up of such short periods, that while they are insensibly passing, and from their minuteness, unheeded, a vast lapse of time has gone by; and every succeeding moment, charged with additional hope, is also the harbinger of its own additional disappointment.

Henry had taken an interest in Roallan, and felt an affection for him, which the superior knowledge and acquirements of the one were likely to inspire in the breast of a backwoodsman, who derives instruction when he can give an equivalent in another way. The nights when Roallan and he lay together on the buffalo robes of their lodge, if it afforded the one an opportunity of giving an account of things of which the other had only gleaned a faint idea from books of history and travels, the advantage was counterbalanced by the wandering of the succeeding day, when, though with a head as high as that of the proud young lord by whose side he rode, there was not the slightest sign on the wild prairie that woodsman did not note. No foil on the grass, no spot in the clay, no sudden chirp of a bird, no stealthy retreat of a wolf, no note of a raven, but has its signification in that country, where there is no chart by which to steer, and where the "keeping *the eye skinned*," and noting those marks by which success is followed up and danger avoided, form the habits by which life is to be sustained in the mountain wilds.

In all this, Henry had been the instructor of Roallan; and although he had not a very apt pupil, yet the consciousness of his deficiency in woodcraft, rendered Roallan the more dependent and the more grateful to him for the pains he took to teach what it was there, so necessary to know. A few excursions taken together, bound them still closer, where the same food was divided between them, the same wants had been satisfied, and danger to one was danger to both, pleasure to one was pleasure to both, and there was no object deserving attention to one that must not necessarily interest the other. So they grew together in friendship and intimacy; each finding the other to possess that quality of true nobility which belongs to no class, and is found as often in the backwoodsman of America as in the court of the Tuileries or St. James's. Henry had been much interested in the romantic attachment of his friend when in the mountains, and he could not conceive why there could not have been a temporary marriage, such as is customary in these wilds, especially as he saw that the affections of Idalie had, notwithstanding the restraints of her sex and the reserve shown by all women in that region, all the appearance of being as strong for Roallan as were his toward her.

He was however, naturally puzzled at the appearance here of a person of education and station in society, which required some introduction, who resembled so much, in the slight traits he had seen, the Idalie of the mountain, who could pass him without shunning his eye or giving any token of recognition. Whether there was an identity or an illusory resemblance, he could not determine; and the early dawn found him pacing up and down, still in anxiety and suspense. It occurred to him to inquire at the watch-house, where, had any thing happened on any of the beats, it ought to be reported. A few drunken brawls had taken place, but nothing to excite attention; and there was no person detained on any charge.

It was now light, and Henry returned. Not knowing what farther step he could take, he entered the hotel, and the drowsy porter knew or cared nothing about the cause of his anxiety. He threw himself on a sofa, and tried to sleep; but repose came not, though disagreeable dreams rode upon his broken slumber. At last Roallan's servant, Jasper, who had been ignorant of his master's absence, broke into the room and awoke him, pale and agitated, inquiring for him in terms which showed an anxiety and distress equal to that of Henry; and the boy shed tears and uttered exclamations of self-reproach, as if by his care or vigilance he could have prevented, what he believed had happened—an accident to his master.

CHAPTER V.

It was two nights after we left Roallan, that we again find him, in a small but well-furnished apartment. He was in bed, and apparently laboring under the effects of some opiate. His hands were made fast by means of a strait-waistcoat, and a nurse in the room, gave it all the appearance of a chamber appropriated to one laboring under temporary derangement; indeed, the wild and haggard appearance of its inmate, his bloodshot eye and incoherent expressions, would have strongly confirmed such an opinion. The nurse was laboring to persuade him to take some light food previous to his getting up; and finding it impossible to prevail on him to do so, was muttering her regrets that she should have been left with a person she could not manage. After some time, however, she quitted the room, and Roallan fell into a broken slumber.

The darkness and the confused state of his thoughts, had destroyed in his mind the distinctions of day and night. It was some time before the nurse returned. After noting carefully that he slept; she cut, softly, the cords that confined his arms, but so as not to give them immediate freedom, and then leaving the door open, and taking her hat and shawl, she quietly left the house, leaving all the doors unlocked behind her except the outer one, and opening the shutters of a low window adjoining, in the passage. Roallan was left sole occupant of the house. It was evening when he awoke from the first refreshing sleep he had had since his confinement, and he called for something to slake a burning thirst. Not being answered, he rose, and in the exertion the cords gave way, and he found himself at liberty to use his arms, and get rid of his disagreeable attire. Had he known exactly where he was, and what had brought him into his present situation, he might have felt an emotion of joy at his emancipation; but he knew not in what way to direct the channel of his thoughts, particularly as he found himself alone, in a house of which he had no knowledge. Finding the door open, he went into an adjoining room, and then into another; but there was no food, and the water he had nearly exhausted in the only jug which contained any. In his search he found his clothes. They had been folded and neatly put away. The faint recollections he had of the events that preceded his coming thither, were beginning to awaken in his mind, but he could not form any idea of the time he had been ill, if ill he had been. Hunger now assailed him with more force than the previous thirst; but there was no appearance of food, and he found that famine was to be appeased and liberty attained, at the same time; so he set himself about changing his night dress for his own recovered attire; and then, seeing so many windows that opened to the veranda, it was not difficult to find one that would give him egress.

The evening was setting in, and the air was mild, but a sense of feebleness and bewilderment took possession of him, thus launched out from a house of which he knew nothing into a deserted suburb, more like a house-breaker than an innocent man, detained by fraud and violence, and left to liberate himself when his strength should return. He wandered some distance toward what he thought must be Fell's Point—and, in fact, so it was—but it was some time before he made up his mind to enter one of the many houses that are there ready to supply good food and a place of repose to those who require them. It was, at last, at the sign of the Half Moon, that he collected courage to stop; and having entered, asked if he could have any thing. The keeper of the tavern, a widower, with an excellent house-keeper, was not long in setting before him what he thought would be sufficient for one of his delicate appearance; and he was not a little surprised to find it disappear with a rapidity seldom equaled, even in the country celebrated for fast eating. He replenished the board again, and the first sign of abatement in its consumption was, when there was sufficient cessation for the question as to what day of the week it was. "Friday," was the answer. "It is then three days since—" Roallan here checked himself; and his host, accustomed to see persons recovering from what is called, in that neighborhood, a *spree*, not having a very distinct reckoning, left the discussion of the remainder of the food and the time to his guest's discretion.

A couple of sailors now came in, and seated themselves at the table, having ordered something to follow them, and continued a conversation that had been previously commenced regarding the shipment of some of their mates. It was so far uninteresting, until one remarked that he did not like that kind of service, and would not wish to serve in a yacht; there was so much caprice, and they never cared for weather; he, for his part, would rather be in a Dutchman, who put his helm down and went to bed till the gale was over, than with those daredevils, who seemed to wish to better themselves in a storm of wind. The word yacht, caught Roallan's attention; and he asked, with an air of as much unconcern as he could assume, if there was any yacht in port. "There was one sailed on Wednesday night, and a clipper," answered one of the men. The whole of Roallan's misfortunes and their cause were brought afresh to his recollection by these words. It was, then, to cover the embarkation of Idalie, that he had been forcibly seized and detained. "And the wind?" he asked. "Has been fair ever since," was the answer.

Roallan's calm good breeding, showed itself at this moment more than at any other period of his life. He said not a word; and nodding courteously, went into the front room, and paid his bill. It was not until he got into the street that he felt the blood return to his heart; and then, if it would have served any end, he might have given way to one of those gusts in which the pent-up feelings of rage and disappointment have vent. He walked on until he came to a turn, where the water interfered with his direct course. It was here that an omnibus hailed him; and the man who let him in, remarked afterward, that they had taken one freight that could not have gone much farther, so bright were the eyes, and so deadly pale the cheeks.

It was after a late and cheerless dinner at Barnum's Hotel, where Henry, who had ransacked his brain to find some means yet untried to discover his friend, whose remarkable appearance made it easy to describe him, was sitting in gloomy anxiety by an untasted dessert, that one of the waiters rushed in and announced the return of Roallan, who had gone into his own room. Henry immediately followed, and found he had thrown himself on the bed, at the side of which Jasper kneeled, weeping for joy. Henry threw himself beside him, and could scarcely contain his feelings, so much had the event excited him. "Had you but given some clew to where you went, we might have been saved much anxiety, and you much suffering," said Henry, as he embraced his friend.

When Jasper had retired, Roallan did not attempt to conceal that he had been forcibly detained, or that he thought the outrage was connected with the departure of Idalie, of whose identity with the figure he had seen in the oratory he had now no doubt. He had seen no one near her whom he could recognize, nor could he attribute such conduct to any persons who took a merely ordinary interest in Idalie. There was but one—and he was believed to be far away—who would dare to commit such an act, or who could have a motive for it. It made his blood boil to think of it; and it was but a slight suspicion at first, but grew upon him until his whole soul was imbittered with hate and jealousy. Answering almost incoherently to the earnest interrogations of his friend, the undercurrent of his thoughts now took that deep and gloomy course, which strengthens itself as it grows; and before his exhausted frame had sunk under the influence of fatigue, he had wound himself up to a full belief that Altowan was the person who had employed this means to keep him from access to Idalie. He had already rejected the idea of his close relationship; and many facts kept suggesting themselves now, before unheeded, to convince him he had found the clew to the motive as well as the act.

Next day he made his appearance earlier than might have been expected at breakfast. His manner was settled, and no one could have known, by any outward indication, that the most violent passions that agitate the human breast were rankling in his heart. Mirvid was too well bred to express the least curiosity to know what had been the cause of all their anxiety; and Roallan observed, that he had fallen into some bad hands, and had made a narrow escape

CHAPTER VI.

It was about three weeks after the event we have described in the last chapter. Summer was in its pride; the sun was high in heaven, and the sky was blue, and the verdure of the fields of England refreshed the eye of the traveler who had left London to find his way to a more northern part of the island. He traveled by one of those public coaches which are, where they yet exist, so expeditious and so regular. The bright harness and the coats of the horses, shone in the afternoon sun; and occasionally a field of beans in flower, breathed its perfume upon them in their rapid course. A shower had laid the dust, and they bowld along, to use the expression of the coachman, through a country smelling sweet, and looking in happiness and peace. There were three outsides. A talkative, "make-every-body-comfortable" man, who, though he had not the opportunity inside this time, as he expressed it, of mixing legs and pulling up the window to let it down again to spit, and edifying his hearers with opinions supported by select portions of his own adventures, tried to make head against the style of conversation he met with on the top, with which he could neither go along nor understand. One of the other two, was a grazier, and dealt occasionally in horses; and the third was a young man of large stature, whose dress, though plain, was of the finest material; his hair was black and luxuriant, and his complexion, if the deep-red blood had not shone through, would have been of a pale olive; his eyes were of that gray hue which, in most lights, appear to be a lustrous black; the contour of the head might have been either more Greek or Roman; the upper lip was extremely full and short, and though usually compressed, and never changing its expression when silent, was full of sweetness when in the action of speaking. The eye alone, was disagreeable of all the features; and that not from any thing in itself, but because it had a glare to those who caught it fixed upon theirs, from which it was a relief to shrink. This person was seated next the driver, and the two former behind. The restless inquisitiveness of the one had already, without much difficulty, found out the dwelling and occupation of his neighbor the countryman; and as his solitary efforts at pumping the other had been ineffectual, he tried to enlist his blunt companion in the service, by whose awkward attacks the attempt, however, was not very essentially aided.

Things were in this state, when an accident happened which at once turned the thoughts of each to his own safety. Going down a hill, one of the leaders became suddenly unmanageable, and bearing upon the other, pushed him out of the road, in spite of all the efforts of the coachman; and having the command of the pole to which they were attached, the carriage was driven up against some heaps of metal, and thence into the ditch. The bank being high, the coach leaned against it as it dragged; and both the wheel-horses having fallen, their weight and that of the vehicle, stopped the leaders. While the unwigged head of one passenger appeared at the upper window, hallooing for help, there came from the bowels of the coach cries in all the different keys of the female voice. The guard, who had dropped down behind, had some difficulty in opening the door and extracting the bulky owner of the head, whom he laid unceremoniously on his face on the road; while a spinster, whose advancing years had not as yet impeded her activity, jumped out upon his prostrate body. An elderly lady and a girl, were the remaining occupants of the coach. The first had been hurt, and the latter only frightened.

While this had been going on, the outside passengers had been gathering themselves up from the various positions into which they had been thrown, except the grazier, who found his legs and part of his body under the coach, though its weight was in some degree borne off by the hedge upon which it had fallen. The man lay without the power of moving; and while the coachman struggled with the leaders, he was sensible that he must be crushed if they succeeded in dragging the weight above him into a more unfavorable position. The third person had totally disappeared; but the young man whom we have described as sitting beside the driver, and who had been surveying the scene of the disembarkation of the "insiders," no sooner saw the position of his neighbor than he sprang to his relief, and not before his aid was needed, for the plunging of the horses had brought the side of the window against his legs in a way which already put him to the greatest torture. The poor man gave an appealing look to his fellow-traveler, as he laid hold of the weighty mass to prevent its moving to do farther mischief, He asked if there was any thing broken; and finding that the sufferer could not, in his present position, know, he at once, with an extraordinary effort of strength, raised the load sufficiently to permit the guard, who had come round behind, to draw the prisoner from beneath, with no other damage than the loss of one of his boots. The united efforts of those who were willing to aid, together with the help of some laborers who had been passing, soon righted the coach, and liberated the horses that had been thrown down. It was taken safely to the bottom of the hill, and was ready to start again in a few minutes. The passengers were requested to take their places; but the spinster immediately declared that, unless they had other horses—and she even hinted another coachman—she would not enter the coach again, but would hire some other conveyance at the expense of the owners, looking round, as she made her avowal, for support.

Most persons who are not litigious, would prefer being inside a good carriage on their way to a comfortable supper at eight o'clock, after a day's traveling, to standing on the road debating on the merits of an overthrow; however, it is seldom that a female, of whatever appearance, does not meet with some one to take her side when she hoists a signal for aid; and accordingly, the passenger who had been lost during the foregoing scene, appeared again, like an aerolite, among the rest, and declared himself ready to stand by the lady to the last, sooner than be imposed upon. The coachman, seeing that there was no chance of coming to an amicable conclusion, told them they would find their baggage at the place for which it had been booked as soon as they had paid their fare; and speaking to his horses as he made a slight movement of his whip, they started with as much glee as if nothing had happened, leaving the couple of malcontents not more than half pleased with their lot.

The sun was getting low as they neared the end of the stage; and the fellow-travelers had already discovered that their destination was nearly the same—the one to a small village where the coach changed horses, and the other to his own home, immediately beyond. "You can go to no house," pursued the elder, "where you have so good a title to the heartiest welcome and the best it contains, as to mine, which, but for you, would, in all probability, have been the scene of mourning instead of joy at my return; for I have some affectionate hearts, who will owe all their gladness to you; and although I see by your hand, and a right strong one it is, you are a gentleman, and not accustomed to farmers' fare, you will find some nut-brown ale and good beef, which will do as well as living at the inn, and we will order any thing more you like as we pass through the town."

They were soon deposited at the Bald Stag, the inn where they were to stop, and where the farmer found a light cart with a powerful horse, ready to take him to the end of his journey. "The nag can do without you, Dick," said his father to a strapping youth in a smock frock and top-boots; "as you have not saved your father's life this time, you will give place to this gentleman, who has. Come, sir, mount! we won't be long, or the sorrel has changed his ways since we last met." And the jolly owner of the equipage, which served to transport calves and sheep to the butcher, and do the duty of a family coach into the bargain, took his place with an air of pride and satisfaction, as he spread a great-coat on the swinging board, that answered as a seat, for his companion, and nodding his head and giving a slight stroke of his whip to his son, the horse at once started into a long, easy trot, which brough[illegible]em, after passing through some green lane[illegible] and a tolerably good cross-road, to the home, situated under the shade of some ancient elms. There was not light to see much of the house, except that there were two gables, high and pointed toward the front, and a stone porch, which bore the air of antiquity, through which they entered, and found themselves at once in a large apartment, something between a kitchen and a dining-room. A dark oak table stood in the center; the floor was of stone, and the heads of stags and fallow deer, put up in various positions, adorned the walls, from which were hung different implements of the chase, hats, and an old sword or two, a couple of guns, and a cross-bow. Several hams hung from the naked rafters of the roof, and a large wooden settle stood on either side a wide and well-filled fireplace, before which lay a couple of powerful blood-hounds. There was no road formed up to the door of the house; but they had met a boy, to whom was given in charge the cart and its contents, as they came along the short and noiseless turf toward the entrance, so that they appeared in the midst of this apartment before any notice was given of their arrival.

A matron, with an exclamation of pleasure, was the first to welcome the host to his own fireside. She was still ruddy, and bore the marks of good humor and good cheer in almost the same degree as her husband. Two girls, one of eighteen and the other twelve, and a youth who seemed to be of an intermediate age, formed the group that pressed round the farmer to greet his return; and amid their loud kisses and hearty expressions of delight, the stranger was left to contemplate the sincerity, rather than the grace that was the characteristic of the meeting.

At last however, the worthy host seemed to recollect that there was a spectator who played but an awkward part in this scene of family joy; and a shade of seriousness came over his jolly countenance as he presented his guest to his wife as one to whose aid he owed his whole limbs, and perhaps his life; and it was he whose turn it now became to be the object of interest to the group, who showed by their frank manners, that the expressions of gratitude which they showered upon him were heartily felt. A buxom maid servant, aided by the eldest daughter, was soon busy in arranging a comfortable supper; while the best bed was preparing for him to whom they considered no mark of attention sufficient to convey the sense they entertained of what they owed him. Irish stew and two broiled chickens, with some sausages, were already placed on the board, with some tankards of ale and cider; and although our worthy farmer made many apologies for its deficiency to one whom he doubted not had been accustomed to so much grander fare, yet it was really a meal that was in every way sufficient, both savory and substantial.

There is nothing so attractive as the fumes of a well-loaded board to those who come in from a long journey in the cool of evening; and the travelers applied themselves to it with unaffected zeal. When through the more substantial part of their meal, the father called to his side his daughter, who had hitherto attended to their wants at the table; and giving her some instructions in an under tone, turned to receive his eldest son, who had, by the good use of his long legs and short cuts, now made his appearance from the small town, where he had been left to come in for a late, though not small, portion of the evening meal, which was about to be crowned from a musty-looking bottle, of whose mysterious contents the host knew no name. It had come, he had heard his grand-father say, from foreign parts; and there were but few bottles left, which now served for great occasions only.

It had been, probably, both strong and rich, as it still retained a full and generous flavor. There had been on the board, plenty of that stout, home-brewed ale for which Yorkshire is so famous; and altogether short of a debauch, there could not have been more drank at a sitting.

During this time, the stranger had learned that this family had possessed a small freehold and the lease of an extensive farm for upward of three generations. The freehold was at some distance, as they preferred living on the farm, the owner of which was satisfied with the rent; and they had always enjoyed, besides, some privileges of shooting, of which the grange hall gave evidence, that had been allowed to go on as a continued token of former favor—the farmer still taking a day or two after any outlying deer from the neighboring chase, which extended over a large district of wild moor, broken by deep ravines, whose sides were clothed by stunted oak and wild thorn. "If you would like to have a day's sport," said the farmer, as he saw his guest survey the horns, "though the stags are not in their prime, we might have a stalk to-morrow; the earl would never say a word at my taking a friend;" and laughing, he added, "If he is a bad shot, which perhaps you may be, it would be a buck saved; but if I understand right, you are yourself acquainted with his lordship?" "I ought to be," was the answer; "though I do not know that I should be recognized; but I should enjoy a walk under the primeval oaks of England, and for a deer. I never, that I remember, saw one in Europe." "Well, I'll show you one to-morrow, or it will go hard with me;" and he took a candle from the chimney-piece, which was a sign for a general move, and the host lighted his guest to his apartment—an oaken chamber, with an old bed under a quaint canopy, suspended from the ceiling. There was no apology requisite. It was one of those chambers in which a king might lodge, and might not be a whit too good for a yeoman.

In one of the dark glades of a wild part of an adjoining park, at a little after six the following morning, a gallant hart, which had been mortally stricken, stood at bay under a cliff in one of the deep ravines, by which a brook, often swelled into the magnitude of a river, found its way from the table-land above, into the sea. A single dog challenged, when he thought the quarry inclined to break, or when it suited him, after a moment's refreshment or repose; and the deep note was now reverberating through the glen.

The animal, whose side bore one red stain, as sure a mark as can be made in Smithfield, panting more from the coming sickness of death than the fatigue of a lengthened chase, yet showed a noble front; and the hound, whose first chase of the season it was, felt, apparently, infinitely more distressed, as he bathed in the pool, than the deer he confronted. They had been in this situation for some quarter of an hour, when another actor came upon the scene, bounding down the rocks. The stag for a moment raised his head, and looked wildly, as those who have followed this sport may have marked, as a token that he was about to rush from his bay; but whether nature would not second this last effort to go off and die in peace—a desire which most men have felt in certain moments of their lives—or whether the presence of the hunter had so awakened the energies of the sleuth hound as to render a break at this moment impracticable, it might be difficult to determine; for in a few seconds, before the sound of the rifle could be heard, he sunk on the stones among which he had stood, and a young man, dressed in the garb of a gamekeeper or sporting farmer, bounded to the spot, and dragging the now unresisting object of his chase to the green sward, laid him at length, where the morning sun had just found passage for a beam, and the murmur, with the breeze, came from the ocean. He had stood for a moment, probably contemplating the fine limbs of the stag, the eye that had not yet lost its beauty or its prominence, and the nose turned up to the wind, and the beams of the head laid back in the attitude, as it chanced he lay, in which he had first seen him roused, as he turned against the level rays of the sun, to detect the cause of a crackling branch. In that moment his death had been vowed by the hunter, and in the same position, after a long and difficult chase, he found his vow fulfilled. He was slowly and almost mechanically feeling in his girdle for a knife, when the bark of a terrier turned the attention of the hunter and the hound alike upon the new-comer. This was a person of stout and short figure, in the uniform of a game-keeper, dressed in green, and with a button which distinguished him as belonging to the owner of the park and chase.

The man having seen that the sportsman did not seem inclined either to abandon his prize or to make use of those limbs which Nature had formed for fleetness as well as strength, and which would have soon put him out of reach of his shorter and stiffer form, surveyed the scene with some surprise, as well as an expression of anger, until his eye fell upon the hound, which he instantly recognized. "So, I see Master Sykes has furnished you out; he carries his impudence rather too far. I think this season it was quite enough to pick a deer when he liked, and that which none of the gentry round may do; but now he begins before the heads are clean, and sends a—" the speaker, who had here paused for an appropriate word, found the eye of the young man he addressed fixed upon him, and its expression warned him that it might not be safe to indulge in any terms of abuse. "I have only followed a wounded buck whom I struck on the open heath, which is free to all, and, if you have any desire, you may take half of him, as I am not disposed to load myself down with meat," rejoined the other.

The keeper stared at such a speech, coming from one who had just been found with a dead deer within the park of his master, and not a mile from the house. He was unarmed, and evidently for a moment puzzled how to act. A man of much superior stature, and armed, stood before him, and no assistance was within call, and he thought himself obliged to give some account of him.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, the other, quite heedless of his questioner, had, after reloading, laid down his rifle to examine the animal he had killed. Having felt his back, he looked up and remarked that he was too fat a stag to be neglected, when he perceived his gun in the hands of an enemy, now openly declared, who stood, with a look of triumph and defiance, ready to enforce the duties of his office. Thought and action are so simultaneous in some men, as to make it difficult to calculate how to meet them; and the keeper, feeling secure in an arm that he knew gave him a decided superiority over a comparatively defenseless adversary, seemed rather in the humor to enjoy his superior tactics than to doubt the power of retaining his advantage; the other, however, seeemed to take no notice of what had taken place, and appeared to be, as in some degree he was, occupied in examining the first red deer he had ever seen or killed, stepping backward as he seemed to examine his attitude and appearance. The keeper became amused with the interest with which an object was viewed by another, which to him was so familiar; when he felt himself suddenly in a grasp from which the first struggle let him feel that it was impossible to escape. "Now you will drag that deer up to the shade under the rock and clean him, and leave your mark, as I will trust you no longer; you will then show me the way to the castle of your lord." "Had you let me know that you wanted to go there," answered the fellow, sulkily, "we need not have had a scuffle for your rifle, as it is precisely there I wished to take you." He then quietly yielded the hold he had of the arm, and was released from the grasp in which he was inclosed.

The operation of cleaning a deer by an hereditary park-keeper, was, as may be supposed, not a long one; and when it was finished, the two men took their way, the taller following the less toward a building, which, being situated at the end of a long ridge, towered equally over the surrounding country and the sea. That behind washed the base of the cliff on which it stood; but as they came from the northward, the castle was upon their left; and instead of continuing their way directly toward it, they took a path which lay almost at right-angles to the point of their destination. After continuing in this course for some time, and arriving near the top of the ridge, along which the main approach evidently ran, they fell into a green drive, which led directly to it, broad, and perfectly straight for three miles, with the gate at one end, and the mansion at the other; on either side a lofty mass of chestnut and oak, beneath which shaded walks formed a shelter from the sun or wind, to the effect of which the center drive was exposed.

As they turned into this magnificent approach, the young man stopped a moment to contemplate a scene which appeared to strike him with some peculiar feeling of interest. Not a word having passed between his companion and himself during their walk, the former viewed him with some curiosity, as well as doubt, when he saw him hesitate as if struck by the imposing air of the place, and the noble pile, which, though at some distance, showed a front that lost nothing of its grandeur from being in deep shadow, with a bright morning sun directly behind.

While they stood gazing on this scene, a laborer passed, to whom the keeper said something in a low tone of voice, and who then disappeared in the adjoining grove, while the two continued their progress to the castle.

It was an edifice which, though bearing the name of a castle, had, on the front which they were approaching, no pretensions to that name; being rather a building whose size gave it a claim to be classed either with Warwick or Berkley. The two pedestrians thus approached the gateway which led across a sunken fence into the immediate grounds about the house, and also to the main front, which was flanked on each side by wings of equal height, forming three sides of a square. Two brass guns on either side of the gate, pointed down the avenue; and the whole square was kept in beautiful order like a parade, but no living soul seemed to be stirring, and most of the shutters were closed. "You see we are full early for the castle folks," remarked the keeper; "but if you will come into the waiting-room, we will learn when his lordship is stirring."

They accordingly went through a doorway in the center of one of the wings, crossing a court which appeared to belong to the kitchen offices, and entered a passage, at the side of which was a room, paneled with dark oak, and furnished with plain chairs and a table, on which lay sundry newspapers. A county map hung upon the wall, with several pictures of horses and cattle that were bred on the property. There was nothing superfluous in the apartment, yet there appeared to be no lack of comfort. The keeper, having taken off his hat and stroked down his shock head, as if in honor of the *genius loci*, begged his companion to be seated, and to make himself as comfortable as possible, and to ring if he wanted any thing, he himself being about to leave him for the servant's hall.

There was no objection made to this by the other, who was thus left alone to the contemplation of the various and contradictory channels through which the discerning public obtain their information on passing events. About half an hour had elapsed since the complaint had been lodged by the keeper, and the object of it still remained in that apartment appropriated to those who had any personal business with the Earl of Daerwold. Several servants had come in, but no notice was taken by any of them of the stranger, until an elderly man of a good-humored appearance and large person, enveloped in a great-coat, and with an oil-skin cover to his hat, was shown into the room; who, making a slight bow to its occupant, turned round to the keeper, who appeared in the doorway behind, and asked, "Is this the gentleman?" and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, immediately produced his staff, and told him he was sorry to be obliged to take him before a magistrate, on the information of Ralph Drake, park-keeper to the Earl of Daerwold, for having been found killing deer within the park, and using violence to the keeper, and that if he would give no trouble, he should have every indulgence.

The person thus addressed, was so completely stunned by this speech that it was some time before he could collect himself sufficiently to reply; and the constable, as he appeared to be, added, that the thing was all in rule, and he himself well known all round the country; so there need be no doubt as to the legality of the proceeding. During this harangue, the color, which had left the face of the stranger—that pale olive, which is sometimes met with on the shores of the Mediterranean—now rushed back; and it appeared that only by a resolute effort he was enabled to master some strong emotion. A parcel of idle livery servants began to gather about the door, who seemed to enjoy the scene, and it became necessary to yield to the superior power of the law, or to the force that might be called upon in its support.

"I will follow you, only let us leave this roof." And he moved toward the door with an alacrity that almost resembled an intention to escape; and, in fact, for such it was mistaken by the constable, who, elevating his staff, desired the door to be closed, and two men appeared at the same moment, who, after entering, stood with their backs against it. The prisoner, at a loss to guess the reason of all these contradictory movements, now found himself confined, and the readiness he had exhibited misconstrued; his annoyance was also increased by the grin he observed on the countenances of the assistants. "It is your turn, however, to submit now," said the deer-stealer. "Since you will not let me yield in my own way, you will have to wait for farther orders, and they must come from Lord Daerwold himself." And, seizing the poker, an ever-ready weapon in an English house, told his captors that he would not yield until they took a note, which he would write, to the Earl of Daerwold, at whose instance alone, he could be prosecuted.

Finding that though they had mistaken him before, there was no chance now of any mistake, and that though three against one, the chances were that they could not proceed to coercive measures until more assistance should arrive, and the bearing of their opponent being such as to show that it would not be possible to call out for additional force without the certainty of a broken head to at least one of the party;—after looking at each other, the constable said, with a dignity belonging only to the great in reverses, that as he had, as it were, appealed to the House of Lords, if the note was written, it should be delivered before any farther steps were taken; and if the gentleman—because he now perceived he was a gentleman—would give his word not to leave the room without his consent, he should be relieved, in the mean time, from all intrusion. This gracious speech was made with a thorough knowledge that at a word twenty men would be ready to aid in the recapture, should the individual break his pledge; and if he did not, they might be well recompensed for a short delay.

Meanwhile we pass into another part of the castle. It was a small, but lofty apartment, one side of which was fitted up with all the necessaries of a gentleman's toilet, while through an open door in the opposite wall, appeared a chamber, in which a warm bath held a prominent situation; folding doors, communicating, probably, with a sleeping-room, were opposite to a large window, which opened on a broad terrace confined by a battlemented wall, which overhung the sea; a gentleman of upward of fifty, as he seemed, tall, and of a stern expression of countenance, had apparently just finished his toilet, and receiving his hat from a servant who opened the window, was in the act of stepping out, when he was accosted by a man, in whose short figure and peculiar dress might be easily recognized Ralph, the park-keeper, whose hat being already off, applied his hand to the short, bristly hair that adorned his front, and pulled his stubborn head down to an obeisance as the other addressed him.

"Well, Ralph, any thing wrong in the park?" "Why, please your lordship, I have caught an audacious deer-stealer, and he is in the waiting-room thinking to see your lordship; and I sent for a constable, and come to know your lordship's pleasure." "Who is he?" rejoined the elderly gentlemen; "I suppose the constable can settle the matter with the justice; you know I can not interfere. Is it a poor man?" "No, he seems to be a sort of sporting gentleman," answered Ralph. "Then let the matter take its course;" and he passed on, turning round an angle of the building. It was the usual custom of the earl, to walk some time every morning on the ramparts which crowned the precipitous cliffs extending for some distance on either flank behind the house. A few cannon were mounted on a battery at the extreme end of this line, to the south, which was the highest point; and there was also hoisted, as a sign that the lord of the castle was present, a flag, on which was represented the arms of the house—an arm with a sword, gules on a white field. A small summer-house, built in such a way as to resemble a watch-tower, served as a look-out. It was at the southern angle of the fortification, if such it might be called, and it was toward this that Lord Daerwold directed his steps. There were telescopes and a compass; and thither, morning and evening, this solitary lord took his course; and after examining the horizon with a glass, left the place to the old sailor, who continually kept watch. "No sail in sight?" said he to the weather-beaten sentinel. "Nothing but some cutters," was the reply, and he gave the glass. During the survey that followed, the valet, who had been in the room with his master when he went out, made his appearance at the door, and stated that there was a note from a person who was in custody for poaching, and who requested a moment's interview with Lord Daerwold. "Who is he? there is no name; does he expect I am to interfere? I do not care about a deer, but am I to expect my people to do their duty if I let off such a flagrant offender?" The earl spoke rapidly; and the servant still keeping his ground, he angrily added, "And you, what interest do you take in the matter? I should be glad that you attended to your own affairs, and let alone those that do not concern you; you are always interfering." The bearer of the note, who seemed to pay no attention to this speech, retreated at its close, saying, "I will inquire his name, my lord;" while the other again took up his glass and recommenced his survey.

When the messenger returned to where the prisoner remained—for such he might now be deemed—he found him pacing the apartment in evident impatience, and scarcely liked to tell him of the repulse he had met; but as there was no means of doing otherwise, he addressed him, "I must beg to know your name, sir, as my lord does not wish to hold communication with any person with whom he has no acquaintance." The young man to whom he spoke, stopped suddenly in his walk: "Does he, then, demand my name, of all other men who least needs— however, tell him, if he will know"—and his emotion became painful to behold—"yes, tell him *Esau* would see—" He here checked himself, and added, in a more collected tone, "Lord Daerwold." The good-natured valet, who had been, at first, greatly struck by the appearance of the stranger, found his interest in him increase, as well as his curiosity; doubting however, whether his mind was not unsettled by some misfortune, he scarcely knew how to treat the evidently wounded feeling which he exhibited; though, from his incoherent expressions, it seemed certain there was some connection between the misfortunes of which he appeared the victim and his master, in this instance unintentionally the cause.

After giving a moment's time for the expected explanation, the stranger, who did not seem to comprehend that any more distinct account of himself was requisite, was once more left to himself, and his interrogator again proceeded toward the battlements, where he had left his master,—whose habits had become systematic from the solitary nature of his life, which nothing but the routine he laid down for himself, prevented from becoming a total seclusion.

Feeling that he had been unnecessarily severe to a faithful and attached attendant, he was the more ready, by a not unusual reaction, to atone for the first reception of his application; and at once told him, without inquiring the result, that he would see the delinquent on his return to the castle.

The Earl of Daerwold was a widower, with an only son. He had been twice married. Of the first countess little was known but that she was an Italian, and that early differences separated her from her lord, who succeeded, at an early age, to an embarrassed estate, which was not in a way to be disburdened by any good management of its owner, who sought a refuge from the ruin he saw impending over his ancient domain in a precipitate flight to the Continent, leaving his affairs in most deplorable confusion, and drawing only such a revenue as enabled him to live respectably in a country, where the means of existence, and even the comforts of life, are comparatively cheap. His rank and his religion —for he was a Catholic—soon gave him access to the principal houses and the best society in Rome; while the plainness of his equipage, and want of ostentation in his manner of life, were esteemed rather as an amiable trait of modesty than accounted for by want of funds. It was not probable that a handsome and accomplished youth, should remain long in a country where there is so much beauty and so much passion, without being smitten with the one or excited by the other; and it was not long before he fell in love with a young countess, who had been left a widow at an early age, with a fortune which, in her country, was considered very large; and it was not without feelings of envy, that the youths of Italy who had been at her feet, saw this prize carried off by a stranger.

Two years had passed over, at her villa on the banks of the Arno; the first of which produced a son, and the second was marked by a train of unhappy events, which ended in a separation—the cause of which was a Frenchman of the most dissolute habits, whose debts were of an enormous amount, and whose character rendered it impossible for her husband to permit the intercourse of common acquaintance, much less that of an acknowledged intimacy. The government, at this moment, appointed him to a mission in Canada, which he was glad to accept, and whither the countess repaired with her lord, while her lover found means to follow. The servants had all been dismissed, and the only son left under the care of a friend in the neighborhood of Florence; and it was soon afterward reported, that he fell a victim to one of the complaints incident to childhood, while his mother was supposed to have been lost in her passage into the remote Indian territories, where her paramour retired.

Having carried her from her home without opposition, and the account of her death arriving by the return messenger of the Hudson's Bay Company, the scandal of a divorce was avoided; and her husband, who had dreaded nothing so much as to become the hero of newspaper scandal, or the victim of one of these delicate trials by which the honor of the married state is occasionally vindicated, found himself at once free to return to his own country, disembarrassed of a wife for whose memory he felt yet some lingering fondness. Immediately on his return to England, a match was made up for him with the only daughter of a German Jew, of unknown wealth; who at once advanced sufficient to relieve the great estates of the Christian noble. Lord Daerwold now returned to Italy, and took up his abode in the same neighborhood that had been the scene of his first nuptial happiness; and here, as to the former, there came a boy as a pledge of connubial love; and the fair young bride fell into the elegant indolence of Italian habits, while years passed, and her only son—for she, too, had but one—grew in beauty, and in all the graces that the best models could afford, and acquired all the accomplishments that the best masters could teach. During the first eight years, he had a companion about two years older than himself, who had been recommended by the chaplain, who was an inmate of the house, and took the principal charge of his education.

Nothing seemed to have power to change the smooth current of this life of luxury and repose; and scarcely any event had occurred to ruffle its course. The parents looked with pride and pleasure on the fine features of their fair offspring, as well as on his older companion, whose Roman contour formed a strong contrast to the scion of the Saxon line. About the time the young Lord Roallan—for by such title was the eldest son of the house of Daerwold distinguished—had attained his ninth year, a visitor, a young man who called himself Mondolfi, appeared at the villa, with a sealed note, which he said would explain his business. He was for some time closeted with the English lord, and returned the following day. On the third, the household was apprised of the immediate removal of the family to England, of which the only members left were the chaplain and Rodolph, the companion of the young Roallan. From that period to the time of our first finding the father and son on the shores of America, they had remained constantly in England; where the former had turned his attention to the improvement of his vast estates, for which his father-in-law furnished the means whenever he thought a profitable result could be insured. This, though it increased his revenue, placed him still more under the power of the Jew, and rendered the life of his wife and son the only bond by which he held his property free. About two years previous to the present date, he had lost his second wife; and the castle was rendered gloomy by an event which also caused a well-founded regret in the neighborhood. The doors still were ever open to his friends; but the sumptuous board, though it attracted certain idle men from town, and occasionally the families of the country, had lost its chief attraction in the amiable and graceful countess.

The time was now passing heavily, in the daily expectation of Lord Roallan's return in the yacht which was expected with him from the opposite shores of the Atlantic; and the continual survey of the horizon from the watch-tower, marked the anxiety of the father, for the arrival of a son on whose fate depended, to so great an extent, his happiness and prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was about a fortnight after the events mentioned in the last chapter. A letter from Falmouth had set Lord Daerworld's mind at rest about his son. He was hourly expected; and the occasion of some races in the neighborhood, was to be seized at the castle to assemble a large party to greet his return. Meanwhile the grange, after an absence of a week, had again received the stranger as an inmate; and though he arrived late, he immediately sent a note to Lord Daerwold; and next morning, taking the loan of his host's pony, he repaired early to one of the smaller gates that gave entrance to the neighboring domain, not far from the scene of the death of the stag, which had first introduced him to the castle; and having tied the animal to the branch of a tree, proceeded along a dark alley to a retired spot, where a fountain played into a granite basin. It was so completely buried in the valley, and sheltered by the forest, that no breeze could penetrate its stillness, and no sound but that of the bubbling water, disturbed its repose. A green sward, such as is nowhere found but in England, kept close shaved, gave a velvety softness to the surrounding open; and the noiseless footfall of the stranger, brought him close upon the earl, whose back was turned toward him, before the latter was aware of his approach. An expression of sadness hung over the faint smile with which he received his greeting. "I have asked you to come here when you wish to see me, because I prefer conversing while moving about, to being formally shut up in an apartment; but if it is to urge me again on the subject of your sister, it is a point upon which I can never change, and therefore I forewarn you not to waste any efforts on that score." "It was, indeed, to intreat you once more for a probation, at least to judge yourself of one who can not fail to charm—" The stranger would have proceeded, but was interrupted by Lord Daerwold. "Walter, you know not what you do. Would you imbitter my life to the very dregs? no; rather go back and prevent the worst that can happen, than waste words in adding to the misery it gives me to refuse you any thing you ask. Roallan is in London, and his plans are laid; your friend Mondolfi is in prison for some alleged offense; but if you make haste, you may yet be in time. Waste no time on your friend.

Some stolen goods had been conveyed to his apartment, and even into his pocket, but he will be cleared of that. At present, attend to what is more important: go to the stables on Sykes's pony, and there get the fastest horse you can procure for the first stage on the way to London." The last words were uttered as the stranger was swiftly retracing the way by which he had just arrived. The grooms made no difficulty in saddling what they called the best hack in the stud; and many minutes did not elapse before Altowan, for it was he, was on his way to town, torn by apprehensions, and urging his steed to that speed for which he had been justly recommended.

It was the following forenoon before he reached the metropolis with his best exertions. The heat was excessive, as well as the dust along the road; but when he got within a certain distance, there was something beyond measure irritating in the drudgery of the wagons and water-carts that continually set such examples of patience and coolness. Throwing himself out of the chaise as soon as he reached the more crowded streets, he got into a cab, and directed it to the house where he had left Idalie. With a heart beating as his had never beat before, he knocked at the door of the Countess Bellini. He had, however, sufficient command of himself not to rush past the servant, who appeared to answer his summons, but to ask, with tolerable composure, if Mademoiselle de Montalt was at home. Receiving an answer in the negative, he asked for the countess, and was told that they had both gone to spend the day at a villa in the neighborhood, but were expected back in the evening. The footman seemed ready to shut the door; but seeing that the visitor apparently wished to ask some further question, he inquired if he had any message to leave, holding the door in his hand as if in dread of his forcing himself into the house. This suspicion passed unnoticed, from the agitation of the stranger, who, however, recovering himself, returned to the cab, telling the man to drive to the lodgings near Leicester Square, where he had left Parfin. There he found the information of Lord Daerwold confirmed, that his faithful friend and follower was in custody, awaiting a further investigation before his committal. Having hastily asked at what office the information had been laid, and being directed to that of Marlborough-street, he was driving off, the horse less willing than the master, when the vehicle was, without much difficulty, overtaken by an intelligent-looking boy, who asked if the note he offered was not for the gentleman in the cab. Parfin, having written to Lord Daerwold to procure him bail, and inform Altowan of his apprehension, he had sent a note, in expectation of his arrival, to beg that no time should be wasted on him, as his temporary confinement was nothing; but that he should go immediately to the house of an Italian lady named the Marchese Marvido, where he would find all the information that could be obtained regarding his sister. It was not far. The house was one of those which had been built in Leicester Fields, as a sort of villa, at the beginning of the last century; and though now crowded up into an obscure street, had some pretensions to internal grandeur.

Altowan was shown up a dark oak stair-case, and found the marchese in a somber apartment, scantily supplied with faded furniture. He was not farther announced than as a friend of Mr. Mondolfi. The marchese received him with an interest she could not conceal; so much so as to make it evident that she knew something of his early history. The object of his visit, however, was too near his heart to be long suppressed; and he begged to be informed if the marchese knew any thing of his sister, as he had called at the house where she had been left, and could hear nothing of her. This at once opened the subject, and the marchese did not hesitate to tell him that she had reason to believe that a young English lord had been in communication with the countess, and that she believed they were gone to the neighborhood of Highgate, and, as far as she could understand, that from thence there was some plan of an elopement. "But," continued she, "I can satisfy you on that head in time for you to be on the spot to interfere, should such interference be required." And she rung the bell. The servant who answered it, was directed to send the marchese's waiting woman up to the antechamber, where a conference of some duration took place, while Altowan remained in suspense.

There is a neighborhood around Highgate where there are a number of gentlemen's seats, as well as a number of roads and lanes intersecting and dividing each other in all directions. All the information Altowan was able to collect concerning his sister, was, that she had gone in that direction; but to what part, it seemed impossible to learn, as the visit was intended to be so short that no distinct mention had been made as to the situation of the house, and the servants were unable to make out the name. However, by dint of the abigail of the old marchese, he had found that there were two families on the visiting list, who lived not far from each other; and to one of these it was presumed the visit had been destined. The day passed, and then the evening, and Altowan had returned to his hotel, weary and disappointed from his search; and his anxiety on the subject of Idalie, was shared in almost as great a degree by the marchese, and some other friends who took an interest in the amiable and beautiful orphan. Next morning he found a trace of Roallan, who, it appeared, had left town for his father's, to be present at the fête already mentioned. There was something unaccountably strange in all this. The second day passed, and the morning of the third found Altowan in an agony of suspense, and all the means exhausted by which he hoped to obtain any clew in his research; mean while, the day fixed upon for the fête at Daerwold had nearly come round, and the castle was filling fast with its expected visitors. Altowan had not been invited; but this might have been accident, and he resolved to be present in order to find out from Roallan how far he might be cognizant of the disappearance of his sister.

It had been understood that persons invited to this fête were expected to appear in costume;

and he furnished himself with the dress of a Venetian noble, and started for Yorkshire with a mind harassed by doubts and fears. The resolution had been adopted at the eleventh hour, and by dint of rapid traveling alone, he could expect to appear at the place of his destination in time to be present at the festive scene. It was already ten o'clock when he arrived at the village near the castle, and stopped to change his dress at the Bald-faced Stag, already mentioned. He wished much to communicate with his honest friend at the grange, in case of any plan having been laid of which he might have heard, or any letter awaiting him there from the castle; but there was no time for that, and it was with much difficulty he found the means of conveyance thither—being obliged at last to bribe the post-boy of the last stage to carry him on.

The magnificent approach was lighted from end to end; the ancient trees bearing on either hand, as he advanced, the unwonted load of lamps, which were gently waving in the night breeze. But one carriage had passed him on the road, and in that he saw a solitary figure; but what booted it whether there was one who rushed with more rapidity to the scene of revelry than he who had the best cause? It was a strange feeling that possessed him in approaching for the first time the portals of that proud castle where, hitherto, he had sought an entrance with an air of stealth. The glare of innumerable lights, and the array of liveried servants in the entrance hall, first awoke him from the strange musings and forbidden dreams in which he had been occupied. The porters, in their long staves, stood awaiting the appearance of the inmate of the humble vehicle with as much solemnity as they could have shown to a nobler equipage; and the steward of the household, with his wand of office, marshaled him through ranks of lackeys in gorgeous liveries, to meet the groom of the chambers, who was in a court dress at the door of the first ante-room. The ancient armor and portraits of the olden times, which hung in this spacious hall—purposely less lighted than that he had entered first—and the general style of gloomy grandeur which its dark panels and rude furniture exhibited; the vast fireplace at one side, and the gallery of carved oak opposite for musicians, or such persons as might have been admitted to view, but not partake of the banquet beneath—could not fail to strike one, unaccustomed to the style of feudal habitations, with a sentiment of involuntary respect. And the wild life of him who now viewed it with absorbing interest, with all its romantic vicissitudes, though it had not taught him to appreciate pride in the fame of ancestry, had yet left him free to admire what carries with it a stamp of nobility, and an incitement against the luxurious degeneration that often unworthily contrasts with the records of the past.

Altowan had gazed around like one who had come to trace a genealogy, rather than to partake of the revelry whose sounds the opening of the lofty doors ever and anon brought to his ear. The question of the usher had been unheeded, if heard; and the good breeding of the ancient servitor, prevented his interrupting him in a survey in which he himself unconsciously took a part. The arrival of a fresh party now, however, rendered it necessary to leave the stranger, or to announce him; and the question of his name was again respectfully repeated by the old man, whose eyes were riveted full on Altowan. A blush, perhaps for the first time, shone through the dark skin of the young man; and that light which beams from the eye under the influence of sudden emotion, flashed from beneath a brow for a moment lowered. The questioner shrank momentarily from its beam; but the other, recovering himself, said, in a voice of kindness, "I forgot—Marvido." The name was given and repeated by several attendants as he advanced through a suite of rooms, while the old servant he had left in the ancient hall, turned to another standing near, "A little darker and thicker, but the very moral of the late lord;" and then returned toward his first station, muttering the name "Marvido." Though there were guests in most of the extensive range of apartments that had been thrown open upon this occasion, the chief assemblage was in the ball-room; where those who were masked were principally gathered, and where the gay dance was held, and its accompanying strain echoed to the gilded dome. Lord Daerwold, who stood near the door, was plainly dressed; and but for something in his air, rather than the star of the garter which he wore, might have been passed over as a guest, rather than distinguished as the lord of that splendid revel. He had been talking with that listless grace that sometimes marks the high-bred noble of England, to some persons by whom he was surrounded, when a group of maskers turned toward the spot where he was standing, with the apparent intention of entering another room; and one among them, a lady, in a Greek dress, removed her mask, in order to relieve herself from the heat. She was of extreme beauty, and of that dark, transparent skin that shows the ruddy blood beneath. Her eyes were large, and their lids rather heavy with black eyelashes, which shaded their fire. It was a face never to be seen and forgotten; and Lord Daerwold started as he met the glance of the dark stranger. It was but a moment, and another appeared to replace this group. It was that of a young man, dressed in the ancient costume of a Venetian noble, who now approached. He was of noble appearance and commanding height; and it was not in the first moment that Lord Daerwold recognized the deer-stealer and the Indian chief in that graceful form. He bowed, and with a gaze which would have been offensive from its intenseness, had it not also a character of melancholy, offered his hand, which the other took with a heightened color; but no word passed between them, and the stranger passed on, while the gaze of Lord Daerwold followed until his figure was lost in the crowd, and then he leaned on the mosaic table that stood behind, and a paleness came over him, and his bearing was less haughty, and a look of age and care came over his countenance. Some one remarked to Lord Roallan that his father was unwell; and he, who was unmasked, enjoying more than any the gay dance, was in a moment at his parent's side. With a slight, sad smile, the father welcomed his approach, and they conversed together, the earl refusing to retire; and when Lord Roallan was about to leave him, to take again his place in the dance, his father said, "Go, my boy, but if ever there was a moment when it was your interest to stay by me, it is now." The son would have stayed, but the father waved him off, and addressed himself to some of those who are ever ready in attendance around the great. It was the custom in the Daerwold family, to pension off the ancient servitors of the house when age and a desire for retirement, rendered it requisite; but on grand occasions—the birth-days of the chief members of the family and great holydays—these faithful adherents always appeared, and took their stations in aid of the successor to whatever place they had held in the household. One of these, who had lived in the family before the late earl's death, and who had been left in England during the present earl's first marriage—he who had remarked on the likeness of Altowan to the picture of the earl's father—was standing near the door when that silent interview took place between the host and his unbidden guest; and when Lord Roallan had gone back with the light step of youth, and the conversation had turned to nothings, the eye of the lord of the mansion was ever strained as if in search of something, while his lips alone, performed their part with those about him. The old man's eye at last, met that of his master; and it was a relief to that unbending spirit even to catch what he believed to be a look of sympathy from that humble source; and as he returned the respectful bow of the gray-headed friend of his youth, and observed that he shook his venerable head as he also gazed in the direction that Altowan had taken, a feeling of bitterness it is quite impossible to describe, took possession of him, and those beside him remarked the change which was expressed in his countenance. He became deadly pale, tottered, and would have fallen had he not been caught in the arms of the by-standers. It was now evident, that the master of the house could no longer be master of the revels; and as he withdrew, supported by two of his guests, to an apartment cooler and more retired, he requested that no further notice should be taken of his sudden indisposition. Roallan gave himself up to the spirit of the scene; and the time of supper drew nigh. An ancient gallery, which ran along the courtward side of the main building, communicating with the principal suite, had been set apart for refreshment, and down its center ran a table, which extended the whole length of the apartment, on either side of which were sofas; so that, as it was not intended as a regular meal, parties were formed to abandon themselves to the inviting repose of these cushioned seats, while they enjoyed the cooling draughts from vases of antique plate, and strains of soft music sounded mysteriously among the shadowy arches of the adjoining hall, which opened to the center of the entrance court. Many different groups had formed themselves along the table; and though it was getting late, the dance and the festival seemed to gain, rather than diminish, in numbers as the night advanced. Once or twice a dark stranger was observed to pace slowly through the halls; but if there was something to remark in one of so distinguished mien, being unknown in the world, there was scarce time for conjecture before the object of curiosity had disappeared.

Altowan had searched the various apartments, and examined the different groups with an anxiety it is difficult to describe; but he could see no one in whom he could trace the likeness he sought. Although he was morally certain his sister must be there in mask, he felt that he was yet as far as ever from finding her, as he could not even catch a trace of her companion. It only remained for him, therefore, to watch Roallan, to endeavor by his movements to discover where his attraction lay. The bearing of these two young men to each other, was decidedly opposite; yet there appeared a strong distrust in each, arising from different causes. In the manner of Roallan there was a refined courtesy, which the calm and lofty manner of the other was not likely to thaw; although there was more sadness than anger in the look by which he sought to detect his designs, yet the obvious intention of watching was not the less apparent. For a moment Altowan had turned his head, attracted by something at another part of the room; and when he looked back for Roallan he was gone. He turned toward the nearest door; there was no appearance of his exit there, and he could not distinguish him in the throng. He went to another apartment, and there was equally unsuccessful; and then he changed his course, when, at last, he perceived the object of his search, in earnest conversation with a female domino in pale green. The height was that of

Idalie; but they no sooner saw that they were observed than they separated. Altowan, resolving to keep his eye on his sister, followed her from room to room, until she joined another group of masks in the ball-room. It was now an easier task to watch, as he could observe from a distance, and for some time he kept his eyes on the green domino. At a signal from some others, this group took their way to the gallery, and there, as they sat down before the entrance to the outer hall, from behind one of the pillars, and in its shade, Altowan watched for the party to unmask, though he had no doubt of the identity of his sister. He had not remained there long, when he was surprised by observing that he himself was followed by a female, who, as soon as she caught his eye, made a signal for him to follow her, and disappeared toward the shadowy end of the arches; but he turned before obeying this signal, and to his utter surprise, perceived that the green domino, whose countenance was now exposed, was not Idalie. Mechanically he turned to follow the unknown. She led toward a remote part of the hall, dimly lighted, and behind some piles of ancient armor, opened a small door and invited him to follow. Hesitation was useless; and he at once stepped into a narrow passage, in which stood, on a bracket in the wall, a lantern, which dimly lighted a portion of the low archway, that seemed to conduct to the prisons of an ancient castle. The female turned her head, as she made a sign that Altowan should shut the door; and he discovered, to his surprise, the elder daughter of his friend Sykes, who, putting her finger to her lips, took up the lamp and proceeded along the passage. The length of the way seemed to be very great, and there were several flights of steps to be descended, when they at last arrived at a door whose numerous and massive fastenings, showed that it had been considered an important communication. A key applied to the lock, and the withdrawing of several bolts, let them at once into the open air, when they heard the murmur of the waves below upon the rocky beach.

It was now that Altowan paused to inquire the cause of his being brought to this spot; and his guide, who had put out the light she had hitherto carried, informed him that one of her brothers, who belonged to the corvette, had informed her that preparations had been made on board to receive a lady, and that Jasper—for was it he—had come to tell her, that at whatever risk, she must bring the stranger to a knowledge of the fact, and conduct him to where he might interfere in the matter, if he should see cause. The light was not sufficient to see the face of the handsome girl; but Altowan, when he took her hand in recognition of their former acquaintance, and the knowledge he had of her brother, felt it tremble within his grasp. "We must wait here," she said, "because, though I know that they have not left the castle, I can not tell by what way they may descend to the cove, where the boat is ready for them; but if you wish it, I can go and see where the roads join, for there are two or three paths which unite where it becomes necessary to descend by steps. Meantime, you can keep a look-out round the castle." And she moved away, feeling perhaps that she might have been more rejoiced to have been detained a moment by the stranger; but his mind was too much interested in the fate of his sister, and in the strange and difficult situation in which he himself was placed, to heed the feelings of the Yorkshire maid.

He had not remained long beneath the parapet, which bounded the terrace immediately surrounding the castle, before he thought he perceived some object move on the verge of the steep slope which overhung the rocks; and such was the dread he felt lest the fugitives should escape, that he bounded onward in that direction, and again perceived several moving objects, which were, however, immediately hid by some projecting mass; and, as the swell was considerable on the beach beneath, and the murmur sufficient to drown all minor sounds, he had nothing to trust but his eye, in a very cloudy night, and he found himself on a beetling crag, without having ascertained what had attracted his attention. At last he thought he perceived a dark figure descend the slope, and again he bounded to the spot where it became lost to his sight, and discovered a well-beaten pathway winding down the cliff by a hollow, which the darkness had prevented his before perceiving. Believing it must lead to the cove which served as a landing-place for boats coming to the castle, he followed it, till several turns round projecting rocks, and occasional steps cut in the cliff, at last brought him to a regular stair, formed of steps of rather inconvenient height. It was in a recess in this stair, that a small space was formed out of the rock, and in it was a door. Altowan perceived, by a sharp, low sound, that some one awaited him there; and he moved into the shadow. It was the warning of danger and caution used by the wanderers of other climes, and he felt all his thoughts return to the scenes of his early manhood—to the days of merely animal care, and to the difficulties, the dangers, and the triumphs of savage sovereignty. The whole range of his former exploits, with their lofty enterprise and daring execution; the pleasures of peace enhanced by the glories of war; the vast plains, the torrents, the forests, and the mountains, came back as in a panorama to his view, and an irresistible longing to return to the scenes of his former exploits took possession of him. It was but that low, sharp sound which had aroused these dormant feelings, which had become natural to him, and carried his thoughts to far distant climes. It was the faithful companion of his wanderings, who had been released from his confinement, and had followed him down to the castle; and finding out, with his usual talent for espionage, what was going on, had already arrived on the scene of action. Altowan silently took his hand; his heart was heavy, and his thoughts were far away. The sharp bark of a dog first awoke him from his revery. "Ha!" he said, "there, again, is the medicine-wolf;" and again a low, plaintive howl broke the stillness of the night. "It is the third time in my life that I have heard that sound as a warning of danger and misfortune." "There, again!" "Now you will hear it no more."

The two had stood in silence awaiting the approach of the fugitives. "If they are too numerous," said Parfin, "I must, at all events, make the attempt to rescue her until I can force him to consent to a marriage." The sound of voices here warned them, that several persons were descending the steps, which took a turn so as to hide those who came down from the edge of the recess until they were upon it.

But in order to render clear the narrative of the events of this night, it here becomes necessary to go back a little. Along this part of the coast, which was but thinly inhabited, there had long been carried on, at intervals, a contraband trade in Hollands, and also in cambric. The periods of landing their cargoes, by the smugglers, were arranged with considerable ingenuity by the fishermen, and the intervals between these exploits were so long that the suspicions of the coast guard were lulled, and no seizure had ever taken place on that spot, nor, for a long time, in the neighborhood; but the confidence of fancied security, had at last betrayed those connected with these enterprises, with a boldness that amounted to indiscretion; and one of the depôts was a vault, cut in the rock, to which the landing where Altowan stood, formed a platform.

The appearance of Altowan at the castle, had disconcerted the plan first laid for getting Idalie away without an interview with her brother, which Roallan knew might lead to her revoking her promise, and to the interference of his father. As soon, therefore, as he saw Altowan enter, and caught his searching eye, he knew that some instant change must be made in his arrangements. He contrived to get Idalie to leave the most frequented rooms, and finally to retire before she was aware that her brother was in the castle. He then set about the more difficult task of preventing the interference of Altowan, and accordingly, a few minutes after, saw him in a retired corner of the entrance hall, in earnest conference with Ralph the keeper. He had explained, that the stranger who had been caught deer-stealing, might, in some degree, interfere with his projected elopement; and there was some discussion in a low tone as to the mode of preventing any obstruction. At last, as if a sudden thought had come upon him, the young lord turned to his companion, and asked if he had not heard something of the smugglers. The darkness did not prevent his perceiving a change in the countenance of the keeper; and he proceeded to reassure him, adding, that he had no wish to interfere against these poor people, but that they might be made useful in guarding the lady he wished to take on board. Relieved from the personal apprehension of having been discovered in connection with the smugglers, Ralph disappeared, and immediately left the house. Should force be necessary in acting against the stranger, he felt that it would be a grateful revenge to him after his defeat, in the favor shown by Lord Daerwold to the offender; and he went on thinking, that even if it were not necessary, he might contrive to have the object of his hatred treated as a spy of the excise.

"Drinkwater!" said a short figure, as it approached a rugged portion of the cliffs, which were here cut by an almost inaccessible ravine. After a moment's pause, a low whistle was heard, and the figure descended a portion of steep rock, and found himself in presence of about twenty men. "When will the tide serve?" he asked. "Not till morning, and you must get us the key of the castle vault, or we must send her back; it was a cursed blunder, her being here, and the vault is the only chance; and there will just be light, and that is all; and the yacht there, too." "Oh! she will not meddle," answered the new-comer; "and for the vault, we are right enough about that too, if you will do a little job for the young lord. He wants you to take a girl on board for him in your boat, and to guard her in case her friends wish to take her from you; which, however, is not likely, as they will watch his boat, and you can go round to the Seals' Stone, and take her from there. I will manage all the rest; but," he added, in a lower key, and more impressively, "you must let another party watch for a scout, who has come to the hall from the borough town, and he thinks he has smelt something; and if he is about, you can do nothing to-night, and I fear the thing will be blown." "Did you see any thing, Dick?" said one of the men, in a whisper. "What should I see, you fool?" answered the other, and the conversation was stopped for a moment. "One of you will find me at the castle terrace, near the door. Change your ground, meanwhile, but don't be far off," resumed Ralph, and without waiting for an answer, he mounted the rock and disappeared.

There was a deliberation for some time among the remaining party, upon whom the information of there being a spy, seemed to have had considerable effect; and it was now debated what should be done with him. The cargo they expected, it was agreed by all hands, was too valuable to be lost; and if the spy was in the way of its being landed, he must be quieted at all risks. With this resolution, they changed their ground, and sent a scout to the door under the terrace, as directed. It was not long after this sentinel had taken his post, that Ralph again appeared among the gang, telling them that it was this very spy who was about to interrupt the elopement of the fugitives, and that they were to look out in case of a whistle. In the mean time, two were to follow him, and a boat's crew to go down to be ready with the yawl at the Seals' Stone. These directions were given with the haste which prevents consideration; and, indeed, there was little reflection to be expected from men who had so much at risk.

We must now return to the platform upon which Altowan and Parfin were posted, under the shadow of the cave-like entrance of the vault. A faint sound of footsteps descending the stair, at last caught the ear of Altowan; and the pressure of his arm by his companion gave him to understand that it had also been observed by him; and they stood, not with the responsibility of those who were amenable alone to their own knowledge of the laws of right and wrong between man and man, but with a complicated mass of laws hanging over them. This thought passed rapidly through the mind of Altowan as he laid down the brace of pistols he had in his hand and felt for the dagger, which was the only weapon of Parfin, and laid it away also. He had scarcely thus disarmed himself and his friend, when those descending the steps, were close upon the spot where they stood. It was not a moment to be fastidious about identity. Altowan at once stepped out, and seized Idalie in his arms. The suddenness of his appearance, and the excited state of her nerves, caused her to utter a scream, and then she sunk insensible in his embrace. The moment was critical for Roallan; and he turned round to look for his trusty aid Ralph, who no sooner saw what had taken place than he gave the signal agreed upon to call for aid; and as a dozen men came hurrying down the steps, he whispered to their leader, "It is the spy, and he is in possession of the vault." Two of the leading ranks of the smugglers had seized upon Altowan, while Parfin, kept back by the crowd in the narrow stair, searched for the arms which had been left on the landing-place. It was impossible for Altowan, without relinquishing his hold of Idalie, to free himself from these assailants; and, in her inanimate state, he could not let her go without running the risk of her falling down the precipitate descent beneath; but he called on Parfin, in a language unknown to those who held him, to take charge of his burden while he shook off his antagonists. At the sound of that voice, which he had never heard cry for succor before, Parfin, without having found what he sought, leaped to receive the fainting Idalie, and convey her on to the landing of the vault; while Altowan, having thus been freed from all encumbrance, exerted his whole strength, and bringing together the two men who held his arms with a concussion by which they were completely stunned, he threw them from him with as much ease as if they had been children. Others were pressing on, and were knocked back upon those behind. Roallan had, meantime, come to the assistance of Idalie, who was slowly recovering while this unequal strife was going on; but the smugglers were now aware that there were two, and, that in a confined space, where their numbers could not avail them, they might have some trouble. Parfin threatening to shoot any one who advanced, there was a moment's pause, when Ralph again whispered to those behind, that a shot or a cry for assistance, and they were ruined. A dark and desperate struggle ensued, in which Altowan had so far the advantage as to have driven back those who were above him, and had shouted for succor, when they were giving way; but the alarm had been hardly given when he felt himself struck in the back by one of those whom he had thrown down. Weakened by the blow, which had sickened him, he staggered and sunk on the steps at the moment that lights appeared above, and several persons called out to be guided to where their aid was required. No sooner had these signs of succor appeared, than the men who surrounded their fallen adversary, disappeared down the cliff, and left Parfin supporting the bleeding form of Altowan, and Roallan the now reviving Idalie. Again the demand from above came too late, and was unheeded by those below, who now required no assistance they could afford. Altowan had received a wound which had penetrated the lungs; and though the outward bleeding was stopped by compression, he felt as those feel who have received their death-blow. While those about him were busied in tending their wounded charge, the rumor of an attack by smugglers, had found its way to the castle, and a great proportion of the household sallied forth on the vague report of Lord Roallan being concerned in the fray; and the persons who had been originally on the look-out on the information of Sykes's daughter, and who were afraid to descend, were now joined, and carried on by a reenforcement from the castle, who came rushing down the steep, and following the path, were soon on the steps which led to the spot where the silent group surrounded the wounded man.

Idalie, as soon as she had recovered from the agitation of the first moment, and was sensible that her brother was attacked by overpowering numbers, struggled with Roallan, in order to throw herself into his arms to share his fate; but the form that fell, and the dispersion of the assailants, at once showed her that the blow had been struck, and she had now only to assuage the pangs of pain which showed themselves too plainly in the pale star-light. The fortitude of Idalie, seemed now to rise with the occasion. She gave directions about removing Altowan, and her energy was conspicuous in contrast with the despondency of her companions. Roallan, seeing that his scheme of elopement was discovered and had miscarried, and feeling that he had lent too ready an ear to the suggestions of Ralph; and Parfin, overpowered by the dread of losing the only person he loved on the earth, and shocked at the fatal effects that were likely to follow his rash attempt, as well as dreading the discovery that must ensue, hung perplexed over the form of her he believed he now must lose. Among the group which surrounded the wounded man, Jasper appeared the most eager to believe that there was no danger. "I have seen a good deal of knife work in the wilderness, and many worse wounds have turned out nothing;" but he stopped, and said no more in the same tone, when he heard Altowan's voice, thick and weak, asking to be propped up. Idalie now comprehended all, and it was on her bosom he leaned; she spoke not, and indeed, no one broke the strange stillness that reigned; but there were some stifled sobs, which the quick ear of woman detected to come from a woman's heart. Idalie, in all her selfishness of sorrow, could not help turning toward the figure from whence came these signs of grief; it was that of a female seated on one of the steps above. A few minutes passed in silent uncertainty, which, at last, was broken by a few words indistinctly uttered to Parfin, who, with a visage scarcely less pale than that of the wounded man, hung over him. When it was explained that he wished to be carried to the castle, Roallan started; the idea of the protection of his father being claimed brought him to a full sense of the crisis that approached. Forgetting his pride and his resentment at his rejected suit, he, who might aspire to the highest match in England, drew near and addressed Altowan. "At this moment of danger, when you, who engross the whole charge, and would include the whole affections of your sister—are you prepared to leave her, in case of your being taken from her, in the hands of strangers, when one is before you able and willing to protect her as his wife, if you will only give him the opportunity of becoming her husband?" He would have continued but for the effect his words had upon Altowan. A wild expression shone from his eyes as he searched for Parfin, and fixed his regards upon him. "Have I, then, been deceived?" he muttered, and, turning to Roallan, he took his hand and placed it in that of his sister. "I see it all now," he said, faintly; and, turning toward Parfin, "Come, help to carry me to the castle."

At that early hour, for it was nearly daybreak, Lord Daerwold had parted from his confessor, who, with a countenance full of thought, was passing with noiseless steps through the corridor that led to the chapel, when he was arrested in his progress by the hurried approach of an old servant, who followed him, begging a word. "Father," said the old man, "some one has come from the cliffs. There has been an affray with smugglers, and the strange gentleman called Marvido, has been taken for a spy, and dangerously wounded. He was being carried here, and asked to be taken to my lord, but I wished to consult you before I mentioned the matter." The priest started, and saying, hastily, "You have done well," retraced his steps toward the apartments of the earl. Meanwhile, those who carried the wounded man, were advancing through the gorgeous rooms, so late the scene of revelry. A few drowsy menials in the sickly light of dawn, were attracted to see what meant that melancholy procession. They laid down their burden gently on a couch in one of the ante-rooms, and to all appearance, their care had been bestowed on one whose spirit was at rest—so still was he, and so pale; but the change of position woke him up, and he opened his eyes and breathed heavily, and gazed around. It was the ancient apartment, where his attention had been attracted by the family portraits; and he looked earnestly at them, unheeding the anxious group, which every moment increased. Parfin kneeled, weeping, and held one of his hands, while Idalie supported his head in her lap. She turned to Roallan, and observed, in a whisper, "He wanders." A slight noise was heard at the further end of the hall, and Lord Daerwold appeared. He had been leaning on the arm of the priest, but quitted it as he saw the crowd, and advanced with a firm step toward the wounded stranger; but when he came up, and those around gave way, and he saw Altowan supported by Idalie, the eyes of both fixed upon him, he at once lost his assumed firmness, and sank on his knees beside the couch. Altowan had stretched out his hand, and it was taken by that proud lord with the eagerness of a beggar, and borne to his lips. The by-standers, except Roallan and Parfin, chiefly composed of his own dependents and servants, looked on in amazement; but the dark eyes of Altowan were still fixed on Lord Daerwold, and his seemed fastened, with increasing intenseness, upon the other. Both, for the short space they were to be together, seemed as if they should live in each other's gaze, and life go out when their look should fade. Altowan was still habited in the dress of the gala, except the false beard and mustache; but his black dress and raven hair, which had been gathered back, contrasted finely with that lofty marble brow on which hung the first dews of death. At last he said, with some difficulty, "Let this not disturb you; it will soon be over;" and would have raised the earl from his knees, but the other, in a voice almost choked by emotion, said, "No, no; let me supplicate, while still I may be pardoned; say that you forgive me; it will be the last sound on earth can give me joy." Altowan made an effort to throw his arms round Lord Daerwold's neck, which the other met, and kissed him. "To die thus, in a fray from a wound by an unknown hand," began the earl; but he was interrupted, and a spark of animation brightened the eye of the dying man, and he said, "Touch not on that, and let me die in peace;" but, in a moment after, added, in a feebler tone, "Let me have your blessing." Lord Daerwold rose from his knees, and those who had known him longest, in all the pride of rank, had never seen him act with more haughty grace, than when, laying his right hand upon the head of Altowan, he said, "Son of my first love, my dearest Walter, you have my blessing; would it could—" He was interrupted by the appearance of a slight convulsion on the countenance of his son. His position was again altered, and he seemed to revive; and, beckoning Parfin to him, he talked long and earnestly with him in an unknown tongue; and when it was remarked that he would fatigue himself, he smiled faintly, and arranging his thick, clustering hair with his hand, he stretched himself out, and fixed his eyes on Idalie, whom he had desired to seat herself at the foot of the sofa, that he might gaze upon her. Lord Daerwold came round and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead, and sat down beside her, and no one spoke. A beam of pleasure lit upon the countenance of the dying man, and he gazed on them with an eager look; but the fire of his eye darkened, and it lost gradually its intelligence; and he once moved his hand before him, as if to move something that obstructed his view, and then lay still. Parfin rushed up and seized the hand; but no kind pressure showed that its owner was sensible of the wonted token of affection.

Two months had elapsed, and the Lord Roallan was united, in the castle chapel of Daerwold, to Idalie de Montalt. The earl's declining health rendered it necessary to shorten the period of mourning; and within a year his remains, in fulfillment of his command, lay beside those of his late acknowledged son.

One evening, late in December, after a stormy day, a ship anchored under the cliffs of Daerwold. Her broad canvas had been taken in, and all made snug; a heavy sea was running, and though the wind blew partly off shore, yet the sound of the breakers on that iron-bound coast, would have given warning of the nearness of danger, had the beetling crags, already in shadow, been merged in the gloom of night. Mr. Stay was pacing the deck, and occasionally stopping to examine the offing, as if dreading a shift of wind. He was interrupted by Jasper, in a sailor's dress, who asked if the boat was ready. The captain—for in that character Stay now appears—turned short at the question, and desired the boatswain to be called. "Can any boat land between the Seals' Stone and the stairs?" he said, as the man approached. "It would be a ticklish job; it is about the turn of the tide however, and it might be done." "Man the boat then, and with men who know the place," rejoined Stay; and, desiring Jasper to say it would be ready immediately, he resumed his perambulations. In about ten minutes Jasper again appeared, leading up the companion a form in which one would have in vain looked for the handsome lineaments of Mondolfi. His look was eager, but his frame did not second the apparent desire to land; but he hastily bade adieu to Stay, and was then, with some difficulty, lowered into the boat. The Countess of Daerwold was in the chapel vault, apparently absorbed in devotion, when the noise of steps, unusual in that sad place, aroused her attention, which before had been riveted on the crucifix, on which the feeble lamp shed a dim, cold gleam. She turned, and saw a figure enveloped in a cloak—the face deadly pale, and the eyes of unearthly glare. It was a moment for superstitious dread; but if, in the education of Idalie, many things had been neglected, and much that she learned in the wild life she led with her father, forgotten, no tincture of superstition had been implanted in her early years. Rising from her kneeling posture, she turned, and calmly confronted her mysterious visitor. He addressed her in the deep and musical tones of his native tongue: "That grief has so much changed me that you should not know me, is but evidence of what I have suffered." He was here obliged to pause from weakness and emotion; and Idalie, recovering from her first surprise, begged him not to agitate himself by recurring to events in which she knew he had meant well to one whom they both loved, adding, "She daily prayed to be forgiven; but he who lies there," pointing to the pall that she had worked in gold embroidery, to cover his remains, "was dearer to me than is husband or child." Mondolfi here interrupted her: "I have come to tell you that I have obeyed his last instructions. I have gone to the wild country he loved, and have been with the great tribe he ruled. They were on the horse plains of the head waters of the great Snake River. I took to them his last words and his last gifts—the arms, the horses, the tobacco, the clothes, and the traps he sent them, with his farewell. I saw a trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, and left funds to keep your father from every want; and I have prayed God to let me return to my adopted son, and lay myself by his remains." The exertion of speaking, had brought a hectic flush on his cheeks. "But come with me to where you can have warmth and food, for I see you have gone beyond your strength," resumed Idalie. "No," he answered, "I must stay here for some time, at least. Send me, if you will, a priest; and when I die, let me be laid by the side of Altowan. And let not," he added, after a slight pause, "your proud Saxon lord, deem the remains of the Count Lascares unmeet companion for the dead of his ancient line." His weakness was so evident, that Idalie now hastened to meet the chaplain, in order to beg of him to bring the invalid to an apartment where he might be attended to. It was some time before she succeeded in finding the object of her search; and when he had hastened to the vault to obey her wish, he found Mondolfi crouched against the elevated range of stone on which the remains of the Daerwolds were laid. He was leaning against it at the foot of the coffin of the object of his affection and care; but when the priest bent over him to offer his aid, he found no answer nor sign; and when he proceeded to take his hand, it was passive, heavy, and cold. He raised with difficulty, the mourner's head; and as the feeble light fell on it, he saw the eyes were open and glassy, and the cheeks were sunk and pale; there was nothing ghastly in his appearance, but it was the countenance of the dead.

Another year had elapsed, and Joseph Henry still lived with his friend: he had fallen into the habits of those with whom he associated, and was foremost in the hunting-field and gayest in the hall. Rich and handsome, he was sought after by all. There was one who had watched the death-bed of Altowan, and had appeared mysteriously in the vault and about the chapel of the castle; and the countess had found out, with woman's tact, that this spirit, which wandered nightly in the shades of Daerwold, was led thither by fruitless love of the dead. She also mourned, and every facility was afforded for indulging her grief. It was the daughter of Sykes, who had nourished a hopeless passion for Altowan; and Henry had often seen her, and on some occasions, he had preceded her to the vault, and watched from a remote corner, the lovely girl indulging in a grief, that however romantic or sincere, was not unbecoming to her really beautiful countenance. There were many of the high-born dames who visited the mansion of his friend, who would not have objected to an alliance with Henry, whose bearing was that of innate nobility, and whose wealth, though great, had also been augmented by rumor; but he had been attracted by the fresh and honest beauty of the yeoman's daughter, and was somewhat taken by her romantic grief. They have married, and sped them to the west, where a principality awaits but the power of wealth or the hand of industry. It is under the shades of that forest which occupies the angle between the Kanzas River and the Missouri, that a log hut, as a beginning, marks the spot where a more spacious dwelling is intended to be built. The fields are already being cleared; and the merry song and the evening dance, mark the character of the labor that a black population perform under an indulgent master. Henry had purchased all the land he could acquire in the neighborhood, up to the line which bounds the lands of the Delawares and Shawnees. The wild grape, the persimmon, and the pawpaw beyond, the cultivated apple, the pear and the peach trees within his inclosures, yield a profusion of fruit; the remoter shades that border on the prairie, furnish game—the sluggish creek and swift river alike supply their tribute; and the herds of horses and cattle, whose bells chime in the wild woods, are his for miles around. His family he has settled near him; but he still longs for another visit to those wilds, where liberty itself, is still more free.

THE END.